Grimms' Fairy Tales

J. L. C. & W. C. GRIMM

‘Thou, queen, art fair,
and beauteous to see,
But Snow White is
lovelier far than thee!’

Grimms' Fairy Tales
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J.L.C. & W.C. GRIMM

GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

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For the past two centuries, these delightful stories, gathered together and written down by brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, have entertained and frightened children and adults alike. The lives of Tom Thumb, Cinderella, Rumpelstiltskin and the Frog Prince form part of our common heritage: they stimulate the imagination and the heart, and linger in our minds for a lifetime. They are funny, disturbing, wise and compassionate. They speak of joy and terror, happiness and revenge, love and violence.

Arthur Rackham's masterly illustrations have all been hand-coloured by Barbara Frith, one of Britain's leading colourists.

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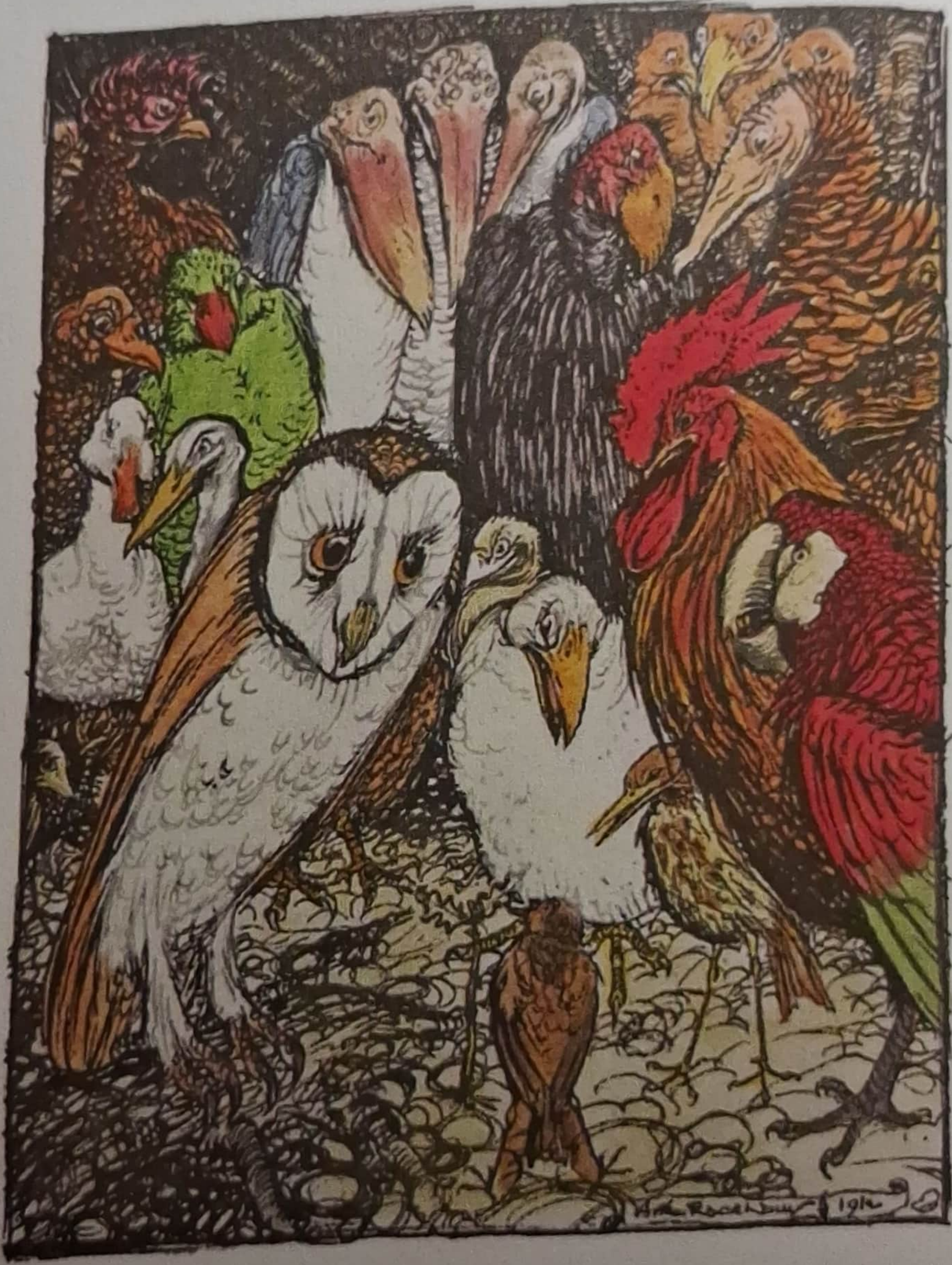
GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

Complete & Unabridged



1912

J. L. C. AND W. C. GRIMM

GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

With illustrations by
ARTHUR RACKHAM
and others

Hand coloured by
BARBARA FRITH

With an afterword by
PETER HARNESS

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GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

The Golden Bird

A certain king had a beautiful garden, and in the garden stood a tree which bore golden apples. These apples were always counted, and about the time when they began to grow ripe it was found that every night one of them was gone. The king became very angry at this, and ordered the gardener to keep watch all night under the tree. The gardener set his eldest son to watch; but about twelve o'clock he fell asleep, and in the morning another of the apples was missing. Then the second son was ordered to watch; and at midnight he too fell asleep, and in the morning another apple was gone. Then the third son offered to keep watch; but the gardener at first would not let him, for fear some harm should come to him: however, at last he consented, and the young man laid himself under the tree to watch. As the clock struck twelve he heard a rustling noise in the air, and a bird came flying that was of pure gold; and as it was snapping at one of the apples with its beak, the gardener's son jumped up and shot an arrow at it. But the arrow did the bird no harm; only it dropped a golden feather from its tail, and then flew away.

The golden feather was brought to the king in the morning, and all the council was called together. Everyone agreed that it was worth more than all the wealth of the kingdom: but the king said, 'One feather is of no use to me, I must have the whole bird.'

Then the gardener's eldest son set out and thought to find the golden bird very easily; and when he had gone but a little way, he came to a wood, and by the side of the wood he saw a fox sitting; so he took his bow and made ready to shoot at it.

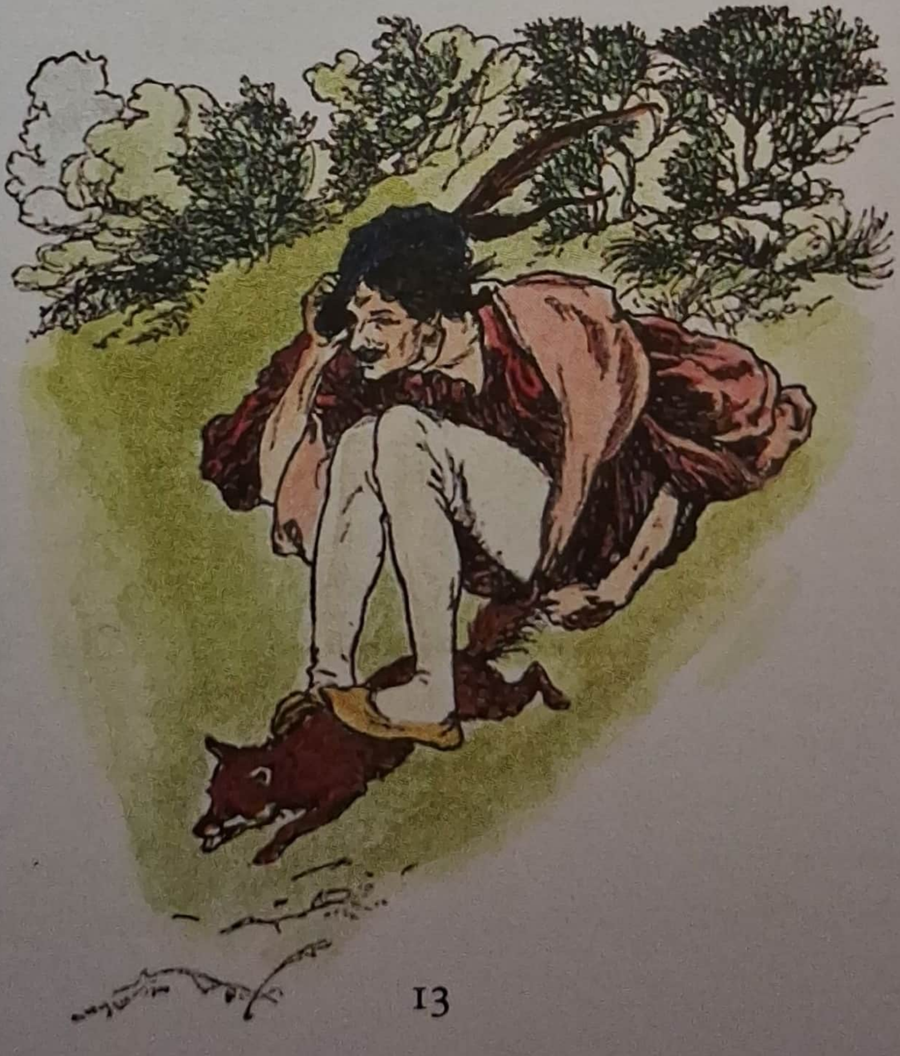
Then the fox said, 'Do not shoot me, for I will give you good counsel; I know what your business is, and that you want to find the golden bird. You will reach a village in the evening; and when you get there, you will see two inns opposite to each other, one of which is very pleasant and beautiful to look at: go not in there, but rest for the night in the other, though it may appear to you to be very poor and mean.'

But the son thought to himself, 'What can such a beast as this know about the matter?' So he shot his arrow at the fox; but he missed it, and it set up its tail above its back and ran into the wood.

Then he went his way, and in the evening came to the village where the two inns were; and in one of these were people singing, and dancing, and feasting; but the other looked very dirty, and poor. 'I should be very silly,' said he, 'if I went to that shabby house, and left this charming place;' so he went into the smart house, and ate and drank at his ease, and forgot the bird, and his country too.

Time passed on and as the eldest son did not come back, and no tidings were heard of him, the second son set out, and the same thing happened to him. He met the fox, who gave him the good advice: but when he came to the two inns, his elder brother was standing at the window where the merrymaking was, and called to him to come in; and he could not withstand the temptation, but went in, and forgot the golden bird and his country in the same manner.

Time passed on again, and the youngest son too wished to set out into the wide world to seek for the golden bird; but his father would not listen to his entreaties for a long while, for he was very fond of his son, and was afraid that some ill luck might happen to him also, and prevent his coming back. However, at last it was agreed he should go, for he would not rest at home; and as he came to the wood, he met the fox, and heard the same good counsel. But he was



thankful to the fox, and did not attempt his life as his brothers had done; so the fox said, 'Sit upon my tail, and you will travel faster.' So he sat down, and the fox began to run, and away they went over hill and dale so quick that their hair whistled in the wind.

When they came to the village, the son followed the fox's counsel, and without looking about him went to the shabby inn and rested there all night at his ease. In the morning came the fox again and met him as he was beginning his journey, and said, 'Go straight forward till you come to a castle, before which lie a whole troop of soldiers fast asleep and snoring: take no notice of them, but go into the castle and pass on and on till you come to a room, where the golden bird sits in a wooden cage; close by it stands a beautiful golden cage; but do not try to take the bird out of the shabby cage and put it into the handsome one, otherwise you will repent it.' Then the fox stretched out his tail again, and the young man sat himself down, and away they went over hill and dale till their hair whistled in the wind.

Before the castle gate all was as the fox had said: so the son went in and found the chamber where the golden bird hung in a wooden cage, and below stood the golden cage, and the three golden apples that had been lost were lying close by it. Then thought he to himself, 'It will be a very droll thing to bring away such a fine bird in this shabby cage;' so he opened the door and took hold of it and put it into the golden cage. But the bird set up such a loud scream that all the soldiers awoke, and they took him prisoner and carried him before the king. The next morning the court sat to judge him; and when all was heard, it sentenced him to die, unless he should bring the king the golden horse which could run as swiftly as the wind; and if he did this, he was to have the golden bird given him for his own.

So he set out once more on his journey, sighing, and in great despair, when on a sudden his friend the fox met him, and said, 'You see now what has happened on account of your not listening to my counsel. I will still, however, tell you how to find the golden horse, if you will do as I bid you. You must go straight on till you come to the castle where the horse stands in his stall: by his side will lie the groom fast asleep and snoring: take away the horse quietly, but be sure to put the old leathern saddle upon him, and not the golden one that is close by it.' Then the son sat down on the fox's tail, and away they went over hill and dale till their hair whistled in the wind.

All went right, and the groom lay snoring with his hand upon the golden saddle. But when the son looked at the horse, he thought it a great pity to put the leathern saddle upon it. 'I will give him the good one,' said he; 'I am sure he deserves it.' As he took up the golden saddle the groom awoke and cried out so loud that all the guards ran in and took him prisoner, and in the morning he was again brought before the court to be judged, and was sentenced to die. But it was agreed, that, if he could bring thither the beautiful princess, he should live, and have the bird and the horse given him for his own.

Then he went his way very sorrowful; but the old fox came and said, 'Why did you not listen to me? If you had, you would have carried away both the bird and the horse; yet will I once more give you counsel. Go straight on, and in the evening you will arrive at a castle. At twelve o'clock at night the princess goes to the bathing-house: go up to her and give her a kiss, and she will let you lead her away; but take care you do not suffer her to go and take leave of her father and mother.' Then the fox stretched out his tail, and so away they went over hill and dale till their hair whistled again.

As they came to the castle, all was as the fox had said, and at twelve o'clock the young man met the princess going to the bath and gave her the kiss, and she agreed to run away with him, but begged with many tears that he would let her take leave of her father. At first he refused, but she wept still more and more, and fell at his feet, till at last he consented; but the moment she came to her father's house the guards awoke and he was taken prisoner again.

Then he was brought before the king, and the king said, 'You shall never have my daughter unless in eight days you dig away the hill that stops the view from my window.'

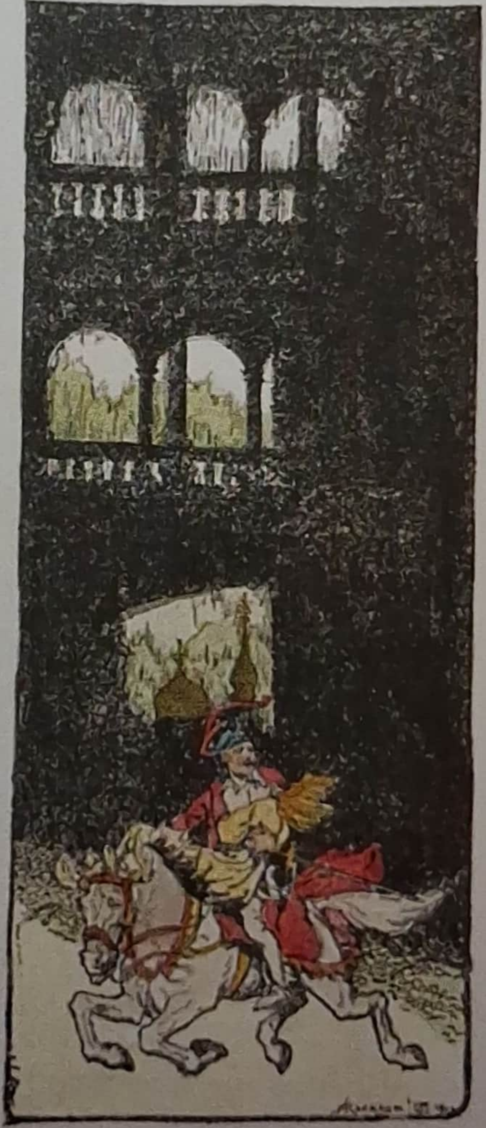
Now this hill was so big that the whole world could not take it away: and when he had worked for seven days, and had done very little, the fox came and said, 'Lie down and go to sleep; I will work for you.' And in the morning he awoke and the hill was gone; so he went merrily to the king, and told him that now that it was removed he must give him the princess.

Then the king was obliged to keep his word, and away went the young man and the princess; and the fox came and said to him, 'We will have all three, the princess, the horse, and the bird.'

'Ah!' said the young man, 'that would be a great thing, but how can you contrive it?'

'If you will only listen,' said the fox, 'it can be done. When you come to the king, and he asks for the beautiful princess, you must say, 'Here she is!' Then he will be very joyful; and you will mount the golden horse that they are to give you, and put out your hand to take leave of them; but shake hands with the princess last. Then lift her quickly on to the horse behind you; clap your spurs to his side, and gallop away as fast as you can.'

All went just so. Then the fox said, 'When you come to the castle where the bird is, I will stay with the princess at the door, and you will ride in and speak to the king; and when he sees that it is the right horse, he will bring out the bird; but you must sit still, and say that you want to look at it, to see whether it is the true golden bird; and when you get it into your hand, ride away.'



This, too, happened as the fox said; the young man carried off the bird, the princess mounted again, and they rode on to a great wood. Then the fox came, and said, 'Pray kill me, and cut off my head and my feet.' But the young man refused to do it: so the fox said, 'I will at any rate give you good counsel: beware of two things; ransom no one from the gallows, and sit down by the side of no river.' Then away he went.

'Well,' thought the young man, 'it is no hard matter to keep that advice.'

He rode on with the princess, till at last he came to the village where he had left his two brothers. And there he heard a great noise and uproar; and when he asked what was the matter, the people said, 'Two men are going to be hanged.'

As he came nearer, he saw that the two men were his brothers, who had turned robbers; so he said, 'Cannot they in any way be saved?'

But the people said no, not unless he would bestow all his money upon the rascals and buy their liberty. Then he did not stay to think about the matter, but paid what was asked, and his brothers were given up, and went on with him towards their home.

And as they came to the wood where the fox first met them, it was so cool and pleasant that the two brothers said, 'Let us sit down by the side of the river, and rest a while, to eat and drink.'

So he said, 'Yes,' and forgot the fox's counsel, and sat down on the side of the river; and while he suspected nothing, they came behind, and threw him down the bank, and took the princess, the horse and the bird, and went home to the king their master, and said. 'All this have we won by our labour.' Then there was great rejoicing made; but the horse would not eat, the bird would not sing, and the princess wept.

The youngest son fell to the bottom of the river's bed: luckily it was nearly dry, but his bones were almost broken, and the bank was so steep that he could find no way to get out. Then the old fox came once more, and scolded him for not following his advice; otherwise no evil would have befallen him. 'Yet,' said he, 'I cannot leave you here, so lay hold of my tail and hold fast.' Then he pulled him out of the river, and said to him, as he got upon the bank, 'Your brothers have set watch to kill you, if they find you in the kingdom.'

So he dressed himself as a poor man, and came secretly to the king's court, and was scarcely within the doors when the horse began to eat, and the bird to sing, and the princess left off weeping. Then he went to the king, and told him all his brothers' roguery; and they were seized and punished, and he had the princess given to him again; and after the king's death he was heir to his kingdom.

A long while after, he went to walk one day in the wood, and the old fox met him, and besought him with tears in his eyes to kill him, and cut off his head and feet. And at last he did so, and in a moment the fox was changed into a man, and turned out to be the brother of the princess, who had been lost a very great many years.

Hans in Luck

Some men are born to good luck: all they do or try to do comes right, all that falls to them is so much gain, all their geese are swans, all their cards are trumps – toss them which way you will, they will always, like poor puss, alight upon their legs, and only move on so much the faster. The world may very likely not always think of them as they think of themselves, but what care they for the world? What can it know about the matter?

One of these lucky beings was neighbour Hans. Seven long years he had worked hard for his master. At last he said, 'Master, my time is up; I must go home and see my poor mother once more; so pray pay me my wages and let me go.'

And the master said, 'You have been a faithful and good servant, Hans, so your pay shall be handsome.' Then he gave him a lump of silver as big as his head.

Hans took out his pocket-handkerchief, put the piece of silver into it, threw it over his shoulder, and set off on his road homewards. As he went lazily on, dragging one foot after another, a man came in sight, trotting gaily along on a capital horse. 'Ah!' said Hans aloud, 'what a fine thing it is to ride on horseback! There he sits as easy and happy as if he was at home, in the chair by his fireside; he trips against no stones, saves shoe-leather and gets where he's going he hardly knows how.'

Hans did not speak softly so the horseman heard it all. 'Well, friend, why do you go on foot then?' he asked.

'Ah!' said Hans, 'I have this load to carry: to be sure it is silver, but it is so heavy that I can't hold up my head, and I can tell you it hurts my shoulder sadly.'

'What do you say of making an exchange?' said the horseman. 'I will give you my horse, and you shall give me the silver; which will save you a great deal of trouble in carrying such a heavy load about with you.'

'With all my heart,' said Hans: 'but as you are so kind to me, I must tell you one thing – you will have a weary task to draw that silver about with you.

Undeterred, the horseman got off, took the silver, helped Hans up, gave him the bridle into one hand and the whip into the other, and said, 'When you want to go very fast, smack your lips loudly together, and cry "Jip!"

Hans was delighted as he sat on the horse, drew himself up, squared his elbows, turned out his toes, cracked his whip, and rode merrily off, one minute whistling a merry tune, and another singing,

'No care and no sorrow,
A fig for the morrow!
We'll laugh and be merry,
Sing neigh down derry!'

After a time he thought he should like to go a little faster, so he smacked his lips and cried 'Jip!' Away went the horse at full gallop; and before Hans knew what he was about, he was thrown off, and lay on his back by the roadside. His horse would have run off, if a shepherd who was coming by, driving a cow, had not stopped it. Hans soon came to himself, and got upon his legs again, sadly vexed, and said to the shepherd, 'This riding is no joke for a man who has the luck to get upon a beast like this that stumbles and flings him off as if it would break his neck. However, I'm off now once and for all! I like your cow now a great deal better than this smart beast that played me this trick, and has spoiled my best coat, as you see, in this puddle; which, by the by, smells not very like a nosegay. One can walk along at one's leisure behind that cow – keep good company, and have milk, butter and cheese every day into the bargain. What would I give to have such a prize!'

'Well,' said the shepherd, 'if you are so fond of her, I will change my cow for your horse; I like to do good to my neighbours, even though I lose by it myself.'

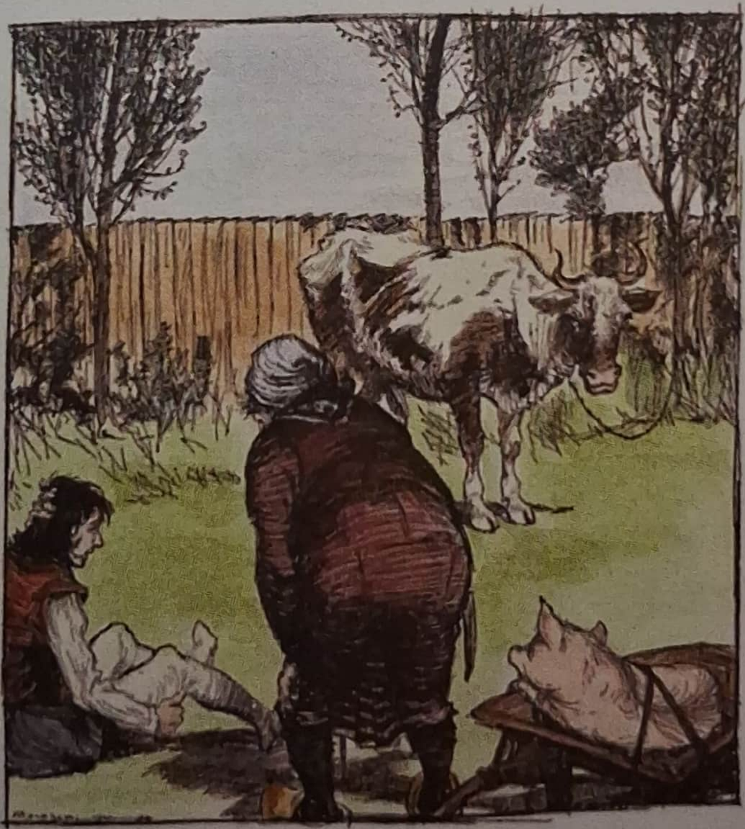
'Done!' said Hans, merrily. 'What a noble heart that good man has!' thought he. Then the shepherd jumped upon the horse, wished Hans and the cow good-morning, and away he rode.

Hans brushed his coat, wiped his face and hands, rested a while, and then drove off his cow quietly, and thought his bargain a very lucky one. 'If I have only a piece of bread (and I certainly shall always be able to get that), I can, whenever I like, eat my butter and cheese with it; and when I am thirsty I can milk my cow and drink the milk: who could wish for more?' When he came to an inn, he halted, ate up all his bread, and gave away his last penny for a glass of beer. When he had rested himself he set off again, driving his cow towards his mother's village. But the heat grew greater as soon as noon came on, till at last, as he found himself on a wide heath that would take him more than an hour to cross, he began to be so hot and parched that his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth. 'I can find a cure for this,' thought he; 'now I will milk my cow and quench my thirst': so he tied her to the stump of a tree, and held his leathern cap to milk into; but not a drop was to be had. Who would have thought that this cow, which was to bring him milk and butter and cheese, was all the time utterly dry? Hans had not even considered the possibility.

While he was trying his luck in milking, and managing the matter very clumsily, the uneasy beast began to think him very troublesome; and at last she gave him such a kick on the head that she knocked him down; and there he lay a long while senseless. Luckily a butcher soon came by, pushing a pig in a wheelbarrow.

'What is the matter with you, my man?' said the butcher, as he helped him up.

Hans told him what had happened, how he was dry, and wanted to milk his cow, but found the cow was dry too. Then the butcher gave him a flask of ale, saying, 'There, drink and refresh yourself; your



cow will give you no milk: don't you see she is an old beast, good for nothing but the slaughterhouse?'

'Alas, alas!' said Hans, 'who would have thought it? What a shame to take my horse, and give me only a dry cow! If I kill her, what will she be good for? I hate cow-beef; it is not tender enough for me. If she were a pig now – like that fat gentleman you are wheeling along at his ease – one could do something with her; she would at any rate make sausages.'

'Well,' said the butcher, 'I don't like to say no, when one is asked to do a kind, neighbourly thing. To please you I will change, and give you my fine fat pig for the cow.'

'Heaven reward you for your kindness and self-denial!' said Hans, as he gave the butcher the cow; and taking the pig off the wheelbarrow, drove it away, holding it by the string that was tied to its leg.

So on he jogged, and all seemed now to go right with him: he had met with some misfortunes, to be sure; but he was now well repaid for all. How could it be otherwise with such a travelling companion as he had at last got?

The next man he met was a countryman carrying a fine white goose. The countryman stopped to ask him the time; this led to further chat; and Hans told him all his luck, how he had had so many good bargains, and how all the world had seemed to be smiling with him. The countryman then began to tell his tale, and said he was going to take the goose to a christening. 'Feel,' said he, 'how heavy it is, and yet it is only eight weeks old. Whoever roasts and eats it will find plenty of fat upon it, it has lived so well!'

'You're right,' said Hans, as he weighed it in his hands; 'but if you talk of fat, my pig is no trifle.'

Meantime the countryman began to look grave, and shook his head. 'Hark ye,' said he, 'my worthy friend, you seem a good sort of fellow, so I can't help doing you a kind turn. Your pig may get you into a scrape. In the village I just came from, the squire has had a pig stolen out of his sty. I was dreadfully afraid when I saw you that you had got the squire's pig. If you have, and they catch you, it will be a bad job for you. The least they will do will be to throw you into the horse-pond. Can you swim?'

Poor Hans was sadly frightened. 'Good man,' cried he, 'pray get me out of this scrape. I know nothing of where the pig was either bred or born; but he may have been the squire's for aught I can tell: you know this country better than I do, take my pig and give me the goose.'

'I ought to have something into the bargain,' said the countryman; 'give a fat goose for a pig, indeed! 'Tis not everyone would do so much for you as that. However, I will not be hard upon you, as you are in trouble.'

Then he took the string in his hand, and drove off the pig by a side path, while Hans went on the way homewards free from care. 'After all,' thought he, 'that chap is pretty well taken in. I don't care whose pig it is, but wherever it came from, in this it has been a very good friend to me. I have much the best of the bargain. First there will be a capital roast; then the fat will find me in goose-grease for six months; and then there are all the beautiful white feathers. I will put them into my pillow, and then I am sure I shall sleep soundly without rocking. How happy my mother will be! Talk of a pig, indeed! Give me a fine fat goose.'

As he came to the next village, he saw a scissor-grinder with his wheel, working and singing,

'O'er hill and o'er dale
So happy I roam,
Work light and live well,
All the world is my home;
Then who so blithe, so merry as I?'

Hans stood looking on for a while, and at last said, 'You must be well off, master grinder! You seem so happy at your work.'

'Yes,' said the other, 'mine is a golden trade; a good grinder never puts his hand into his pocket without finding money in it – but where did you get that beautiful goose?'

'I did not buy it, I gave a pig for it.'

'And where did you get the pig?'

'I gave a cow for it.'

'And the cow?'

'I gave a horse for it.'

'And the horse?'

'I gave a lump of silver as big as my head for it.'

'And the silver?'

'Oh! I worked hard for that seven long years.'

'You have thrived well in the world hitherto,' said the grinder, 'now if you could find money in your pocket whenever you put your hand in it, your fortune would be made.'

'Very true, but how is that to be managed?'

'How? Why, you must turn grinder like myself,' said the other; 'you only want a grindstone; the rest will come of itself. Here is one that is but little the worse for wear. I would not ask more than the value of your goose for it – will you buy?'

'How can you ask?' said Hans. 'I should be the happiest man in the world, if I could have money whenever I put my hand in my pocket: what could I want more? There's the goose.'

'Now,' said the grinder, as he gave him a common rough stone that lay by his side, 'this is a most capital stone; do but work it well enough, and you can make an old nail cut with it.'

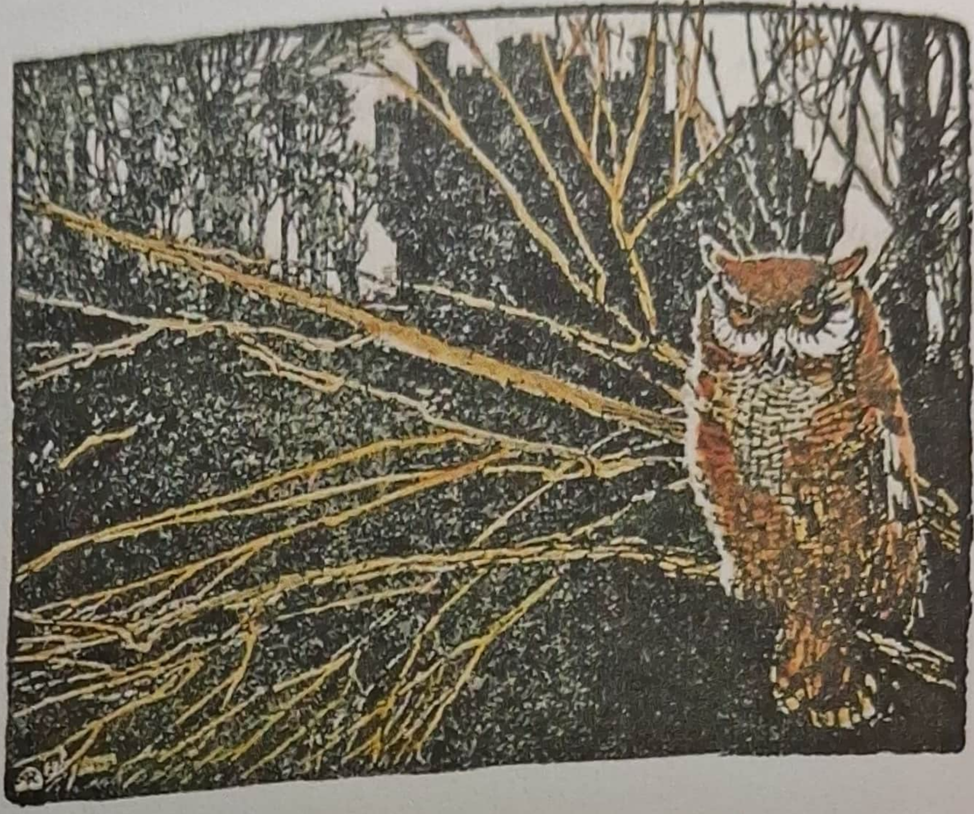
Hans took the stone, and went his way with a light heart; his eyes sparkled for joy, and he said to himself, 'Surely I must have been born in a lucky hour; everything I could want or wish for comes of itself. People are so kind; they seem really to think I do them a favour in letting them make me rich, and giving me good bargains.'

Meantime he began to be tired, and hungry too, for he had given away his last penny in his joy at getting the cow.

At last he could go no farther, for the stone tired him sadly, and he dragged himself to the side of a river, that he might take a drink of water, and rest a while. He laid the stone carefully by his side on the bank: but, as he stooped down to drink, he forgot it, pushed it a little, and down it rolled, plump into the stream.

For a while he watched it sinking in the deep clear water – then sprang up and danced for joy, and again fell upon his knees and thanked heaven, with tears in his eyes, for its kindness in taking away his only plague, the ugly heavy stone.

'How happy am I!' cried he; 'nobody was ever so lucky as I.' Then up he got with a light heart, free from all his troubles, and walked on till he reached his mother's house, and told her how very easy the road to good luck was.



Jorinda and Jorindel

There was once an old castle, that stood in the middle of a deep gloomy wood, and in the castle lived an old fairy. Now this fairy could take any shape she pleased. All the day long she flew about in the form of an owl, or crept about the country like a cat; but at night she always became an old woman again. When any young man came within a hundred paces of her castle, he became quite fixed, and could not move a step till she came and set him free; which she would not do till he had given her his word never to come there again. But when any pretty maiden came within that space she was changed into a bird, and the fairy put her into a cage, and hung her up in a chamber in the castle. There were seven hundred of these cages hanging in the castle, and all with beautiful birds in them.

Now there was once a maiden whose name was Jorinda. She was prettier than all the pretty girls that ever were seen before, and a shepherd lad, whose name was Jorindel, was very fond of her, and they were soon to be married.

One day they went to walk in the wood, that they might be alone; and Jorindel said, 'We must take care that we don't go too near to the fairy's castle.' It was a beautiful evening; the last rays of the setting sun shone bright through the long stems of the trees upon the green underwood beneath, and the turtle-doves sang from the tall birches.

Jorinda sat down to gaze upon the sun; Jorindel sat by her side and both felt sad, they knew not why; but it seemed as if they were to be parted from one another for ever. They had wandered a long way; and when they looked to see which way they should go home, they found themselves at a loss to know what path to take.

The sun was setting fast, and already half of its circle had sunk behind the hill. Jorindel on a sudden looked behind him, and saw through the bushes that they had, without knowing it, sat down close under the old walls of the castle. Then he shrank for fear, turned pale, and trembled. Jorinda was just singing,

'The ring-dove sang from the willow spray,
Well-a-day! Well-a-day!
He mourn'd for the fate of his darling mate,
Well-a-day!'

when her song stopped suddenly. Jorindel turned to see the reason, and beheld his Jorinda changed into a nightingale, so that her song ended with a mournful 'jug, jug'. An owl with fiery eyes flew three times round them, and three times screamed: 'Tu whu! Tu whu! Tu whu!'

Jorindel could not move; he stood fixed as a stone, and could neither weep, nor speak, nor stir hand or foot. And now the sun went quite down; the gloomy night came; the owl flew into a bush; and a moment after the old fairy came forth pale and meagre, with staring eyes, and a nose and chin that almost met one another.

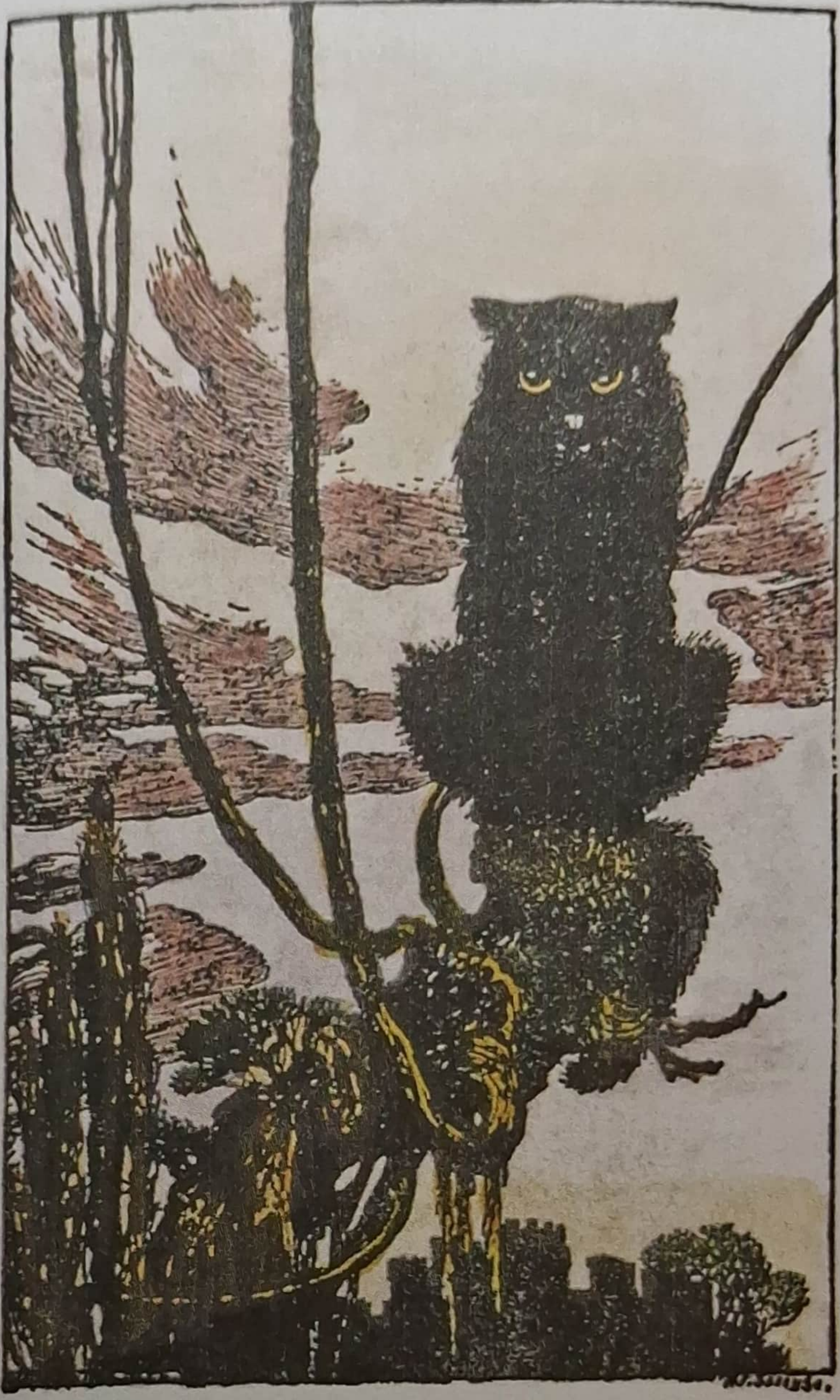
She mumbled something to herself, seized the nightingale, and went away with it in her hand. Poor Jorindel saw the nightingale was gone – but what could he do? He could not speak, he could not move from the spot where he stood. At last the fairy came back and sang with a hoarse voice:

'Till the prisoner is fast,
And her doom is cast,
There stay! Oh, stay!
When the charm is around her,
And the spell has bound her,
Hie away! away!'

On a sudden Jorindel found himself free. Then he fell on his knees before the fairy, and prayed her to give him back his dear Jorinda; but she laughed at him, and said he should never see her again; then she went her way.

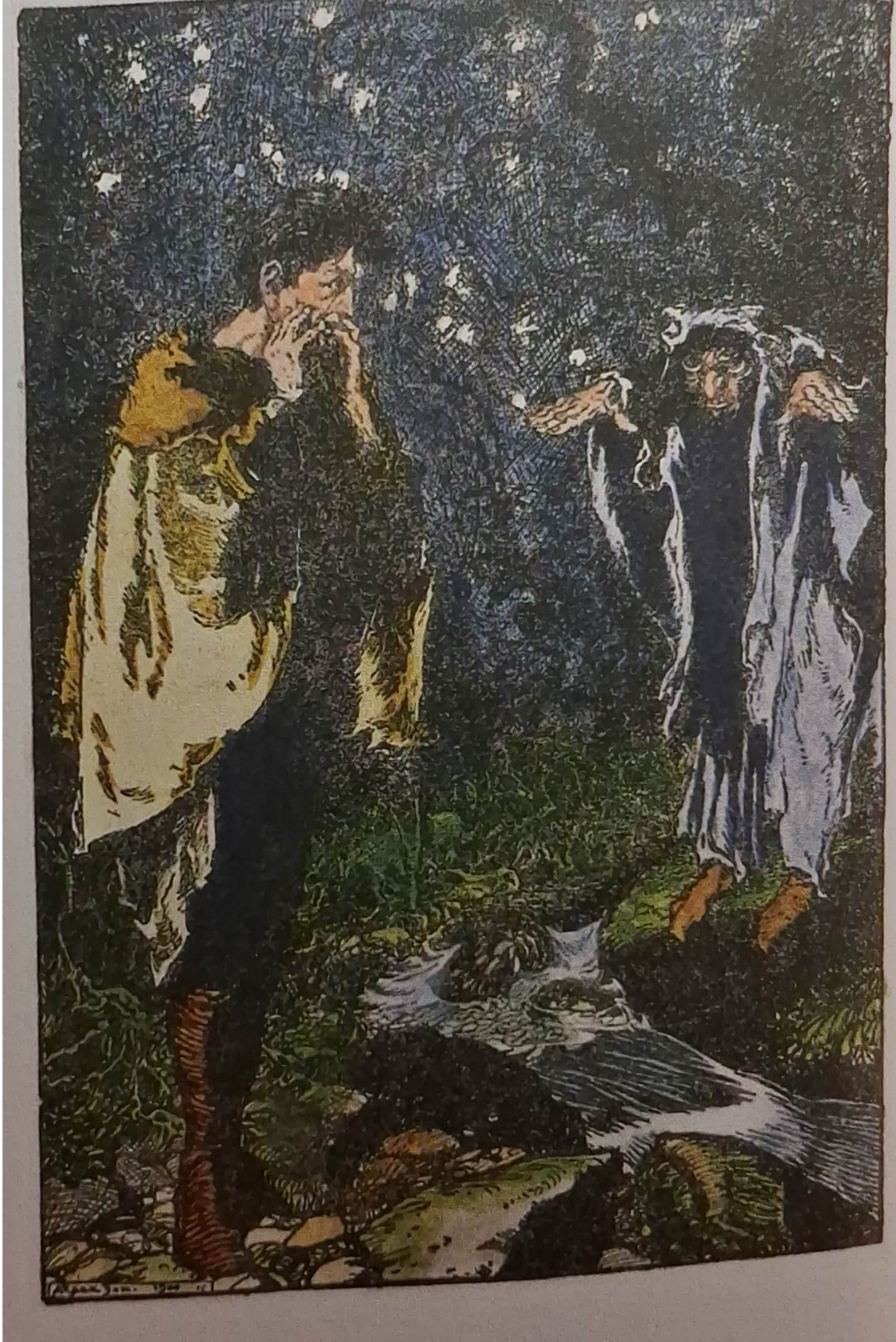
He prayed, he wept, he sorrowed, but all in vain. 'Alas!' he said, 'what will become of me?' He could not go back to his own home, so he went to a strange village, and employed himself in keeping sheep. Many a time did he walk round and round as near to the hated castle as he dared go, but all in vain; he neither heard nor saw anything of Jorinda.

At last he dreamt one night that he found a beautiful purple flower, and that in the middle of it



lay a costly pearl; and he dreamt that he plucked the flower, and went with it in his hand into the castle, and that everything he touched with it was disenchanted, and that there he found his Jorinda again.

In the morning when he awoke, he began to search over hill and dale for this pretty flower. For eight long days he sought for it in vain, but on the ninth day, early in the morning, he found the beautiful purple flower; and in the middle of it was a large dewdrop, as big as a costly pearl. Then he plucked the flower, and set out and travelled day and night till he came again to the castle.



He walked nearer than a hundred paces to it, and yet he did not become fixed as before, but found that he could go quite close up to the door. Jorindel was very glad indeed to see this. Then he touched the door with the flower, and it sprang open; so that he went in through the court, and listened when he heard so many birds singing. At last he came to the chamber where the fairy sat, with the seven hundred birds singing in the seven hundred cages. When she saw Jorindel she was very angry, and screamed with rage; but she could not come within two yards of him, for the flower he held in his hand was his safeguard. He looked around at the birds, but alas! there were many, many nightingales, and he was at a loss to find out which was his Jorinda. While he was thinking what to do, he saw the fairy had taken down one of the cages, and was making off with it through the door. He ran – or flew – after her, touched the cage with the flower, and Jorinda stood before him, and threw her arms round his neck looking as beautiful as ever, as beautiful as when they walked together in the wood.

Then he touched all the other birds with the flower, so that they all took their old forms again; and he took Jorinda home, where they were married, and lived happily together many years: and so did a good many other lads, whose maidens had been forced to sing in the old fairy's cages by themselves much longer than they liked.

The Travelling Musicians

An honest farmer had once an ass that had been a faithful servant to him a great many years, but was now growing old and every day more and more unfit for work. His master therefore was tired of keeping him and began to think of putting an end to him; but the ass, who saw that some mischief was in the wind, took himself slyly off, and began his journey towards the great city, 'For there,' thought he, 'I may turn musician.'

After he had travelled a little way, he spied a dog lying by the roadside and panting as if he were tired. 'What makes you pant so, my friend?' said the ass.

'Alas!' said the dog, 'my master was going to knock me on the head, because I am old and weak, and can no longer make myself useful to him in hunting; so I ran away; but what can I do to earn my livelihood?'

'Hark ye!' said the ass, 'I am going to the great city to turn musician: suppose you come with me, and see what you can do in the same way?' The dog said he was willing, and they jogged on together.

They had not gone far before they saw a cat sitting in the middle of the road and making a most rueful face.

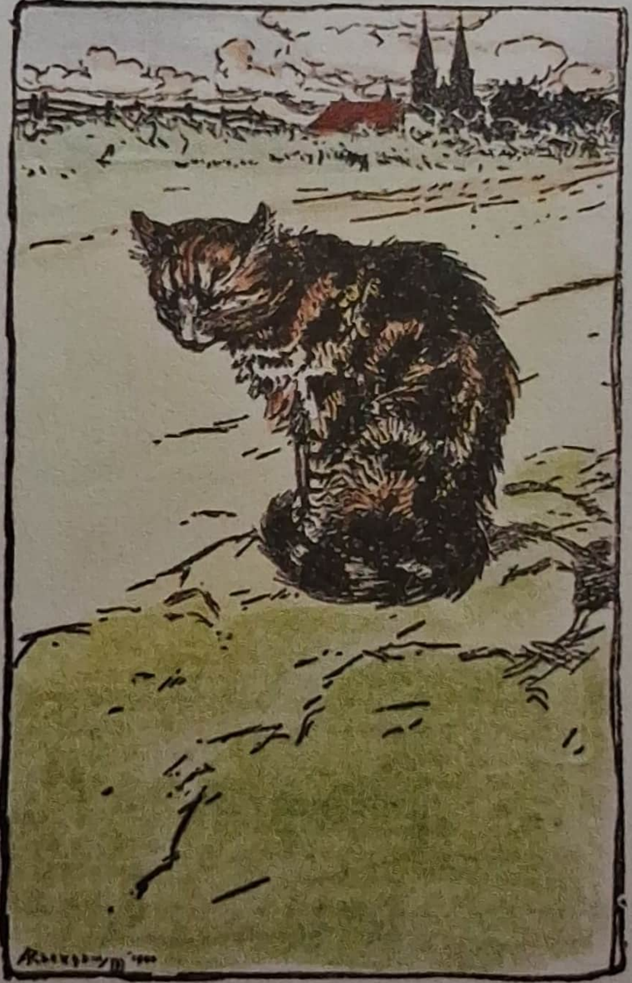
'Pray, my good lady,' said the ass, 'what's the matter with you? You look quite out of spirits!'

'Ah, me!' said the cat, 'how can one be in good spirits when one's life is in danger? Because I am beginning to grow old, and had rather lie at my ease by the fire than run about the house after the mice, my mistress laid hold of me, and was going to drown me; and though I have been lucky enough to get away from her, I do not know what I am to live upon.'

'Oh,' said the ass, 'by all means come with us to the great city; you are a good night singer, and may make your fortune as a musician.' The cat was pleased with the thought, and joined the party.

Soon afterwards, as they were passing by a farmyard, they saw a cock perched upon a gate, and screaming out with all his might and main. 'Bravo!' said the ass; 'upon my word, you make a famous noise; pray what is all this about?'

'Why,' said the cock, 'I was just now saying that we should have fine weather for our washing-day, and yet my mistress and the cook don't thank me for my pains, but threaten to cut off my head tomorrow, and make broth of me for the guests that are coming on Sunday!'



'Heaven forbid!' said the ass, 'come with us Master Chanticleer; it will be better, at any rate, than staying here to have your head cut off! Besides, who knows? If we care to sing in tune, we may get up some kind of a concert; so come along with us.'

'With all my heart,' said the cock; so they all four went on jollily together.

They could not, however, reach the great city the first day; so when night came on, they went into a wood to sleep. The ass and the dog laid themselves down under a great tree, and the cat climbed up into the branches; while the cock, thinking that the higher he sat the safer he should be, flew up to the very top of the tree, and then, according to his custom, before he went to sleep, looked out on all sides of him to see that everything was well. In doing this, he saw afar off something bright and shining and calling to his companions said, 'There must be a house no great way off, for I see a light.'

'If that be the case,' said the ass, 'we had better change our quarters, for our lodging is not the best in the world!'

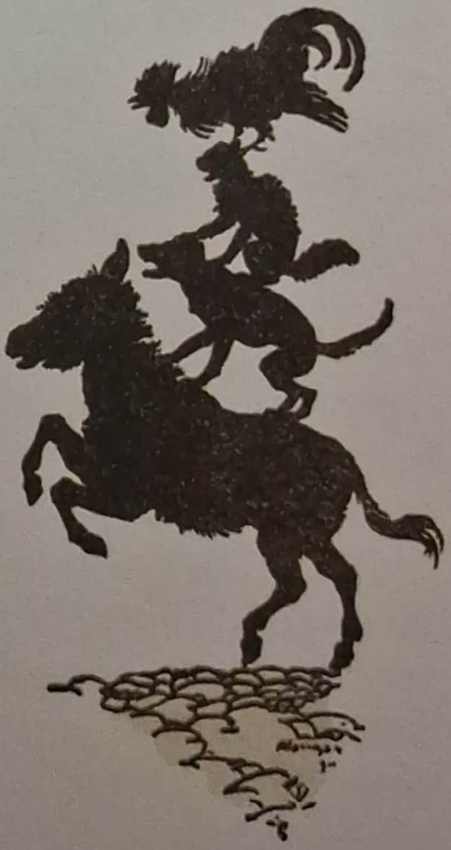
'Besides,' added the dog, 'I should not be the worse for a bone or two, or a bit of meat.' So they walked off together towards the spot where Chanticleer had seen the light, and as they drew near it became larger and brighter, till they at last came close to a house in which a gang of robbers lived.

The ass, being the tallest of the company, marched up to the window and peeped in. 'Well, donkey,' said Chanticleer, 'what do you see?'

'What do I see?' replied the ass. 'Why, I see a table spread with all kinds of good things, and robbers sitting round it making merry.'

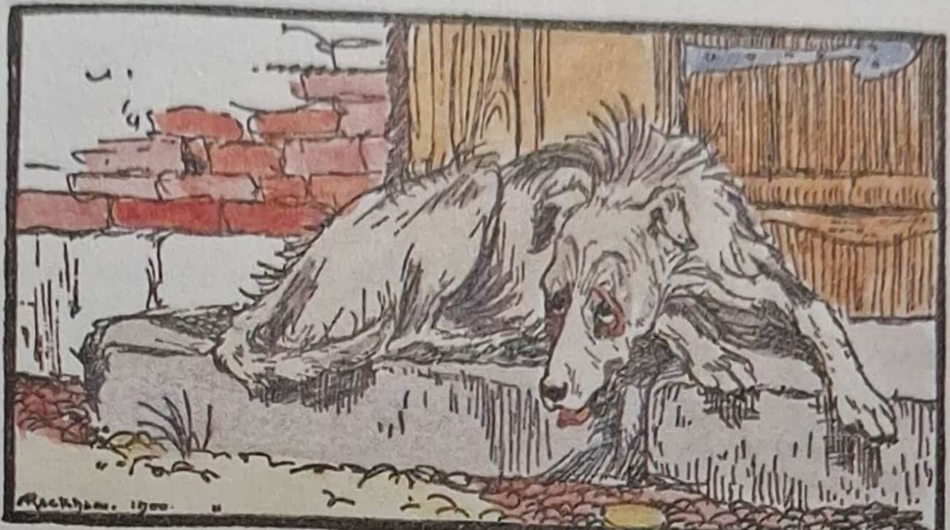
'That would be a noble lodging for us,' said the cock. 'Yes,' said the ass, 'if we could only get in;' so they consulted together how they should contrive to get the robbers out; and at last they hit upon a plan. The ass placed himself upright on his hind legs, with his forefeet resting against the window; the dog got upon his back; the cat scrambled up to the dog's shoulders; and the cock flew up and sat upon the cat's head. When all was ready a signal was given, and they began their music. The ass brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed and the cock screamed; and then they all broke through the window at once, and came tumbling into the room, among the broken glass, with a most hideous clatter! The robbers, who had been not a little frightened by the opening concert, had now no doubt that some frightful hobgoblin had broken in upon them, and scampered away as fast as they could.

The coast once clear, our travellers soon sat down and dispatched what the robbers had left, with as much eagerness as if they had not expected to eat again for a month. As soon as they had satisfied themselves, they put out the lights, and each once more sought out a resting-place to his own liking. The donkey laid himself down upon a heap of straw in the yard, the dog stretched himself



upon a mat behind the door, the cat rolled herself up on the hearth before the warm ashes, and the cock perched upon a beam on the top of the house; and, as they were all rather tired with their journey, they soon fell asleep.

But about midnight, when the robbers saw from afar that the lights were out and that all seemed quiet, they began to think that they had been in too great a hurry to run away; and one of them, who was bolder than the rest, went to see what was going on. Finding everything still, he marched into the kitchen, and groped about till he found a match in order to light a candle; and then, espying the glittering fiery eyes of the cat, he mistook them for live coals, and held the match to them to light it. But the cat, not understanding this joke, sprang at his face, and spat, and scratched at him. This frightened him dreadfully, and away he ran to the back door; but there the dog jumped up and bit him in the leg; and as he was crossing over the yard the ass kicked him; and the cock, who had been awakened by the noise, crowed with all his might. At this the robber ran back as fast as he could to his comrades, and told the captain how a horrid witch had got into the house, and had spat at him and scratched his face with her long bony fingers; how a man with a knife in his hand had hidden himself behind the door, and stabbed him in the leg; how a black monster stood in the yard and struck him with a club, and how the devil had sat upon the top of the house and cried out, 'Throw the rascal up here!' After this the robbers never dared to go back to the house; but the musicians were so pleased with their quarters that they took up their abode there; and there they are, I dare say, at this very day.


A. Rackham. 1900.

Old Sultan

A shepherd had a faithful dog, called Sultan, who was grown very old, and had lost all his teeth. And one day when the shepherd and his wife were standing together before the house the shepherd said, 'I will shoot old Sultan tomorrow morning, for he is of no use now.'

But his wife said, 'Pray let the poor faithful creature live; he has served us well a great many years, and we ought to give him a livelihood for the rest of his days.'

'But what can we do with him?' said the shepherd, he has not a tooth in his head, and the thieves don't fear him at all; to be sure he has served us, but then he did it to earn his livelihood; tomorrow shall be his last day, depend upon it.'

Poor Sultan, who was lying close by them, heard all that the shepherd and his wife said to one another, and was very much frightened to think tomorrow would be his last day; so in the evening he went to his good friend the wolf, who lived in the wood, and told him all his sorrows, and how his master meant to kill him in the morning. 'Make yourself easy,' said the wolf, 'I will give you some good advice. Your master, you know, goes out every morning very early with his wife into the field; and they take their little child with them, and lay it down behind the hedge in the shade while they are at work. Now do you lie down close by the child, and pretend to be watching it, and I will come out of the wood and run away with it; you must run after me as fast as you can, and I will let it drop; then you may carry it back, and they will think you have saved their child, and will be so thankful to you that they will take care of you as long as you live.'

The dog liked this plan very well; and accordingly so it was managed. The wolf ran with the child a little way; the shepherd and his wife screamed out; but Sultan soon overtook him, and carried the poor little thing back to his master and mistress.

Then the shepherd patted him on the head, and said, 'Old Sultan has saved our child from the wolf, and therefore he shall live and be well taken care of, and have plenty to eat. Wife, go home, and give him a good dinner, and let him have my old cushion to sleep on as long as he lives.' So from this time forward Sultan had all that he could wish for.

Soon afterwards the wolf came and wished him joy, and said, 'Now, my good fellow, you must tell no tales, but turn your head the other way when I want to taste one of the old shepherd's fine fat sheep.'

'No,' said the Sultan; 'I will be true to my master.' However, the wolf thought he was jesting, and came one night to get a dainty morsel. But Sultan had told his master what the wolf meant to do; so he lay in wait for him behind the barn door, and when the wolf was busy looking out for a good fat sheep, he had a stout cudgel laid about his back that combed his locks for him finely.

Then the wolf was very angry, and called Sultan 'an old rogue', and swore he would have his revenge. So the next morning the wolf sent the boar to challenge Sultan to come into the wood to fight the matter. Now Sultan had nobody he could ask to be his second but the shepherd's old three-legged cat; so he took her with him, and as the poor thing limped along with some trouble, she stuck her tail straight up in the air.

The wolf and the wild boar were first on the ground; and when they espied their enemies coming, and saw the cat's long tail standing straight in the air, they thought she was carrying a sword for Sultan to fight with; and every time she limped, they thought she was picking up a stone to throw at them; so they said they should not like this way of fighting, and the boar lay down behind a bush, and the wolf jumped up into a tree. Sultan and the cat soon came up, and looked about and wondered that no one was there. The boar, however, had not quite hidden himself, for his ears stuck out of the bush; and when he shook one of them a little, the cat, seeing something move, and thinking it was a mouse, sprang upon it, and bit and scratched it, so that the boar jumped up and grunted, and ran away, roaring out, 'Look up in the tree, there sits the one who is to blame.' So they looked up, and espied the wolf sitting among the branches; and they called him a cowardly rascal, and would not suffer him to come down till he was heartily ashamed of himself, and had promised to be good friends again with old Sultan.

The Straw, the Coal and the Bean

In a village dwelt a poor old woman who had gathered together a dish of beans and wanted to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and that it might burn the quicker, she lighted it with a handful of straw. When she was emptying the beans into the pan, one dropped without her observing it, and lay on the ground beside a straw, and soon afterwards a burning coal from the fire leapt down to the two.

Then the straw began and said: 'Dear friends, from whence do you come here?'

The coal replied: 'I fortunately sprang out of the fire, and if I had not escaped by sheer force, my death would have been certain – I should have been burnt to ashes.'

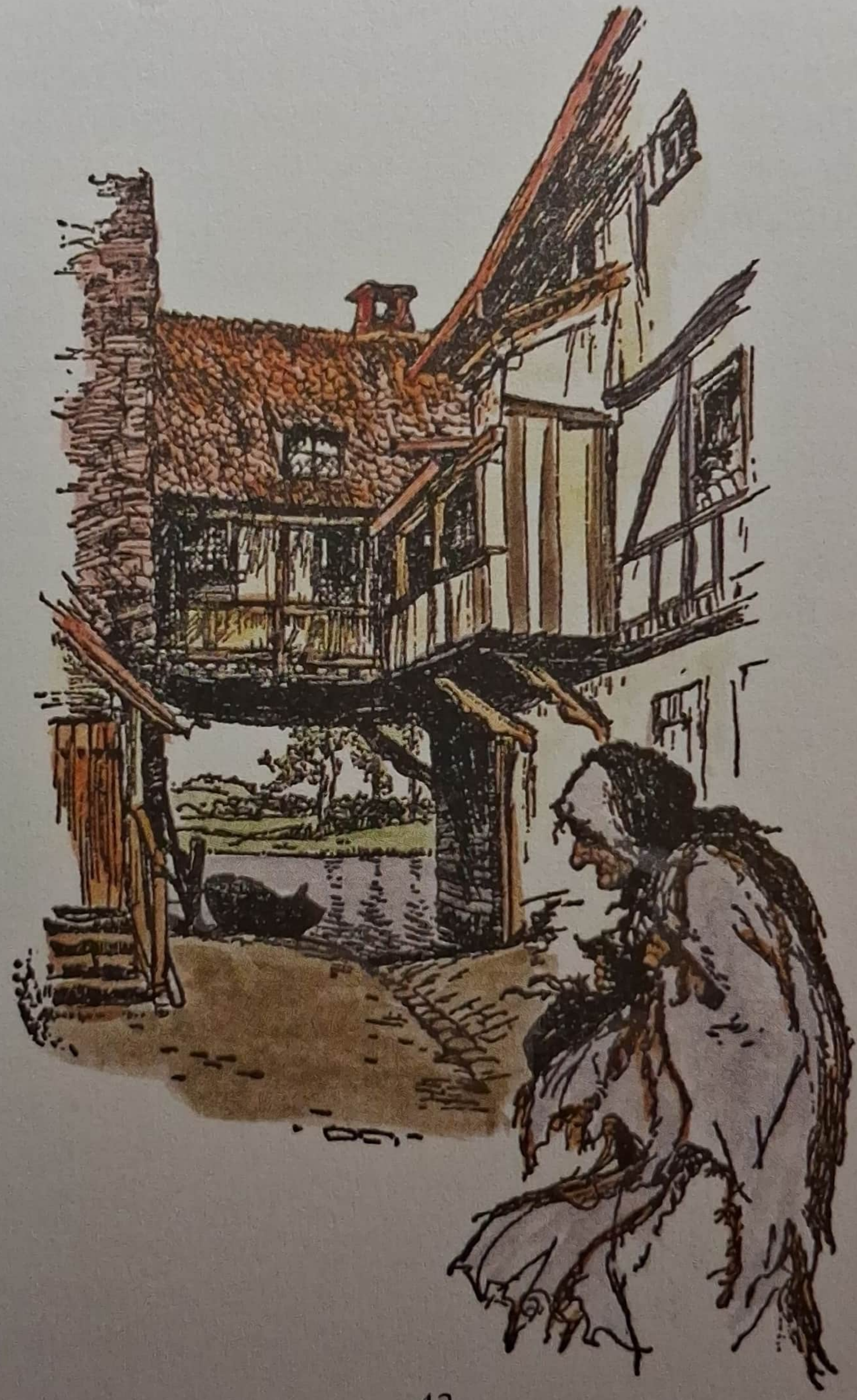
The bean said: 'I too have escaped with a whole skin, but if the old woman had got me into the pan, I should have been made into broth without any mercy, like my comrades.'

'And would a better fate have fallen to my lot?' said the straw. 'The old woman has destroyed all my brethren in fire and smoke; she seized sixty of them at once, and took their lives. I luckily slipped through her fingers.'

'But what are we to do now?' said the coal.

'I think,' answered the bean, 'that as we have so fortunately escaped death, we should keep together like good companions, and lest a new mischance should overtake us here, we should go away together, and repair to a foreign country.'

The proposition pleased the two others, and they set out on their way together. Soon, however, they came to a little brook, and as there was no bridge or foot-plank, they did not know how they were to get over it. The straw hit on a good idea, and said: 'I will lay myself straight across, and then you can walk over



on me as on a bridge.' The straw therefore stretched herself from one bank to the other, and the coal, who was of an impetuous disposition, tripped quite boldly on to the newly-built bridge. But when she had reached the middle, and heard the water rushing beneath her, she was, after all, afraid, and stood still, and ventured no farther. The straw, however, began to burn, broke in two pieces, and fell into the stream. The coal slipped after her, hissed when she got into the water, and breathed her last. The bean, who had prudently stayed behind on the shore, could not but laugh at the event, was unable to stop, and laughed so heartily that she burst. It would have been all over with her, likewise, if, by good fortune, a tailor who was travelling in search of work had not sat down to rest by the brook. As he had a compassionate heart he pulled out his needle and thread and sewed her together. The bean thanked him most prettily, but as the tailor used black thread, all beans since then have a black seam.

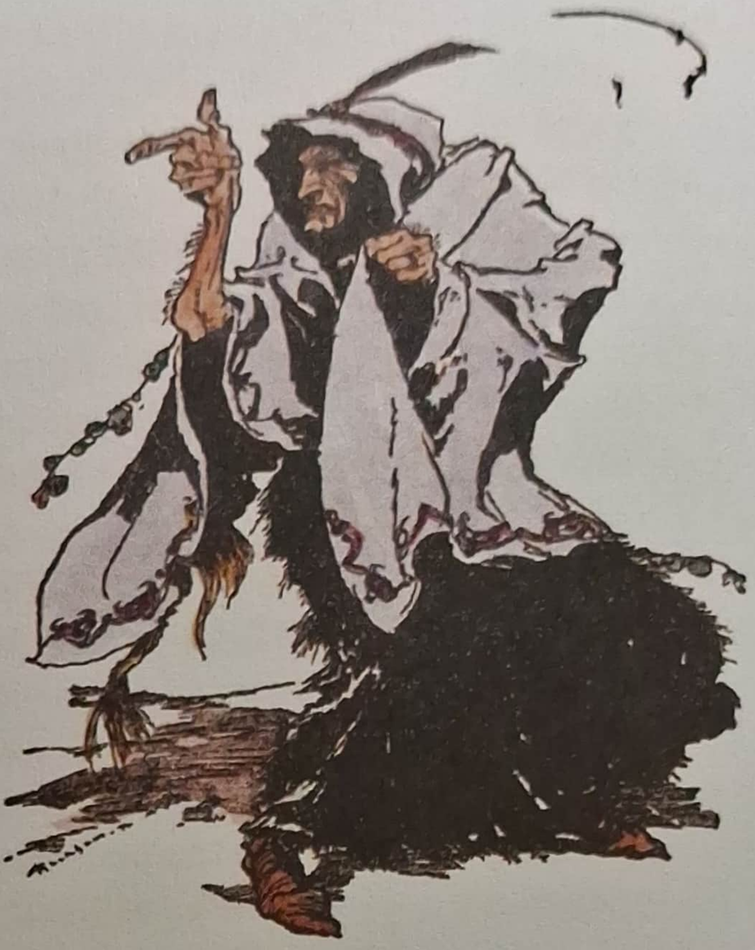
The Sleeping Beauty

A king and queen once upon a time reigned in a country a great way off, where there were in those days fairies. Now this king and queen had plenty of money, and plenty of fine clothes to wear, and plenty of good things to eat and drink, and a coach to ride out in every day; but though they had been married many years they had no children, and this grieved them very much indeed. But one day, as the queen was walking by the side of the river at the bottom of the garden, she saw a poor little fish that had thrown itself out of the water and lay gasping and nearly dead on the bank. Then the queen took pity on the little fish, and threw it back again into the river; and before it swam away it lifted its head out of the water and said, 'I know what your wish is, and it shall be fulfilled, in return for your kindness to me – you will soon have a daughter.'

What the little fish had foretold soon came to pass: the queen had a little girl, so very beautiful that the king could not cease looking on her for joy, and said he would hold a great feast and make merry, and show the child to all the land. So he asked his kinsmen, and nobles, and friends, and neighbours.

But the queen said, 'I will have the fairies also, that they might be kind and good to our little daughter.'

Now there were thirteen fairies in the kingdom; but as the king and queen had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, they were forced to leave one of the fairies without asking her. So twelve fairies came, each with a high red cap on her head, and red shoes with high heels on her feet, and a long white wand in her hand; and after the feast was over



they gathered round in a ring and gave all their best gifts to the little princess. One gave her goodness, another beauty, another riches, and so on till she had all that was good in the world.

Just as eleven of them had done blessing her, a great noise was heard in the courtyard, and word was brought that the thirteenth fairy was come, with a black cap on her head, and black shoes on her feet, and a broomstick in her hand: and presently up she came into the dining-hall. Now, as she had not been asked to the feast she was very angry, and scolded the king and queen very much, and set to work to take her revenge. So she cried out, 'The king's daughter shall, in her fifteenth year, be wounded by a spindle, and fall down dead.'

Then the twelfth of the friendly fairies, who had not yet given her gift, came forward, and said that the evil wish must be fulfilled, but that she could soften its mischief; so her gift was that the king's daughter, when the spindle wounded her, should not really die, but should only fall asleep for a hundred years.

However, the king hoped still to save his dear child altogether from the threatened evil; so he ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and burnt. All the gifts of the first eleven fairies were in the meantime fulfilled; for the princess was so beautiful, and well behaved, and good, and wise, that everyone who knew her loved her.

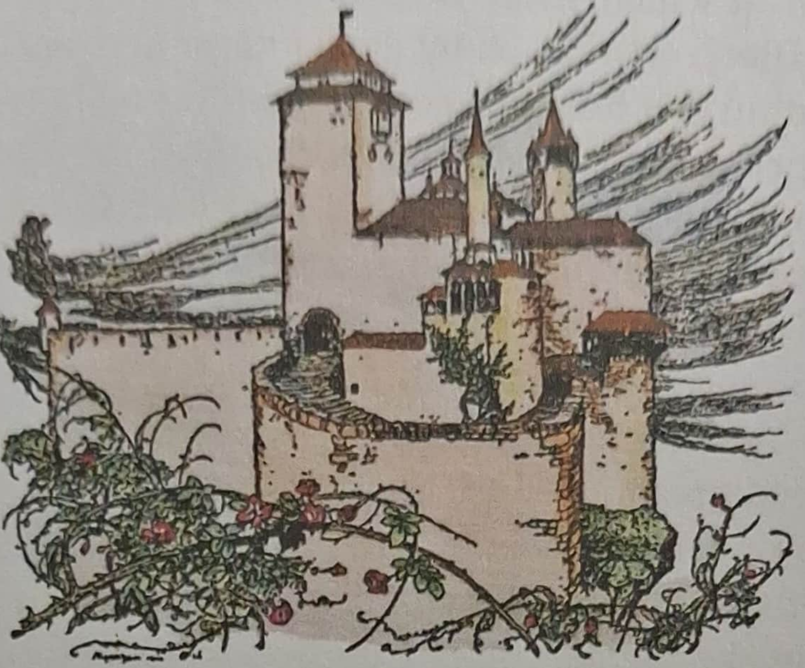
It happened that, on the very day she was fifteen years old, the king and queen were not at home, and she was left alone in the palace. So she roved about by herself, and looked at all the rooms and chambers, till at last she came to an old tower, up which there was a narrow staircase ending with a little door. In the door there was a golden key, and when she turned it the door sprang open and there sat an old lady spinning away very busily. 'Why, how now, good mother,' said the princess; 'what are you doing there?'

'Spinning,' said the old lady, and nodded her head, humming a tune, while buzz! went the wheel. 'How prettily that little thing turns round!' said the princess, and took the spindle and began to try and spin. But scarcely had she touched it, before the fairy's prophecy was fulfilled; the spindle wounded her, and she fell down lifeless on the ground.

However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep; and the king and the queen, who had just come home, and all their court, fell asleep too; and the horses slept in the stables, and the dogs in the court, the pigeons on the house-top, and the very flies slept upon the walls. Even the fire on the hearth left off blazing, and went to sleep; the jack stopped, and the spit that was turning about with a goose upon it for the king's dinner stood still; and the cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen-boy by the hair to give him a box on the ear for something he had done amiss, let him go, and both fell asleep; the butler, who was slyly tasting the ale, fell asleep with the jug at his lips: and thus everything stood still, and slept soundly.

A large hedge of thorns soon grew round the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker; till at last the old palace was surrounded and hidden, so that not even the roof or the chimneys could be seen. But there went a report through all the land of the beautiful sleeping Briar Rose (for so the king's daughter was called), so that, from time to time, several kings' sons came, and tried to break through the thicket into the palace. This, however, none of them could ever do; for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them, as it were with hands; and there they stuck fast, and died wretchedly.

After many, many years there came a king's son into that land, and an old man told him the story of the thicket of thorns: how a beautiful palace stood behind it, and how a wonderful princess, called Briar Rose, lay in it asleep, with all her court. He told, too, how he had heard from his grandfather that many, many princes had come, and had tried to break through the thicket, but that they had all stuck fast in it, and died. Then the young prince said, 'All this does not frighten me; I will go and see this Briar



Rose.' The old man tried to hinder him, but he was bent upon going.

Now that very day the hundred years were ended; and as the prince came to the thicket he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he went with ease, and they shut in after him as thick as ever. Then he came at last to the palace, and there in the court lay the dogs asleep; and the horses were standing in the stables; and on the roof sat the pigeons fast asleep, with their heads under their wings. And when he came into the palace, the flies were sleeping on the walls; the spit was standing still; the butler had the jug of ale at his lips, going to drink a draught; the maid sat with a fowl in her lap ready to be plucked; and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand, as if she was going to strike the boy.

Then he went in farther, and all was so still that he could hear every breath he drew, till at last he came to the old tower, and opened the door of the little room in which Briar Rose was; and there she lay, fast asleep on a couch by the window. She looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her, so he stooped down and gave her a kiss. And the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him; and they went out together; and soon the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and gazed on each other with great wonder. And the horses shook themselves, and the dogs jumped up and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings, and looked about and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls buzzed again; the fire in the kitchen blazed up; round went the jack, and round went the spit, with the goose for the king's dinner upon it; the butler finished his draught of ale; the maid went on plucking the fowl; and the cook gave the boy the box on his ear.

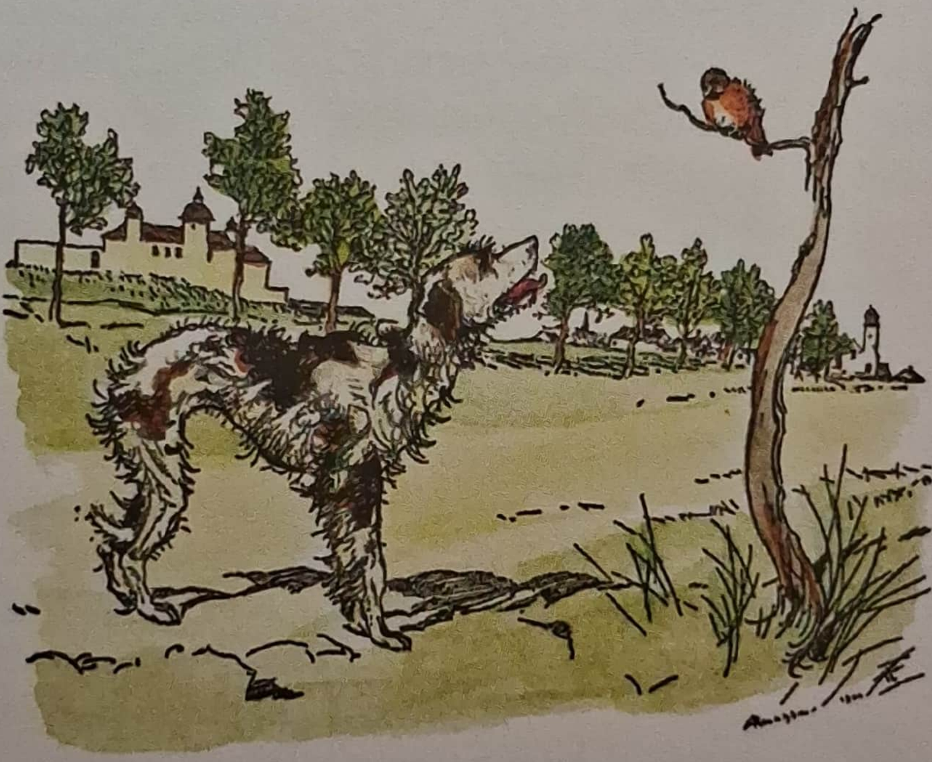
And then the prince and Briar Rose were married, and the wedding feast was given; and they lived happily together all their lives long.

The Dog and the Sparrow

A shepherds dog had a master who took no care of him, but often let him suffer the greatest hunger. At last he could bear it no longer; so he took to his heels, and off he ran in a very sad and sorrowful mood.

On the road he met a sparrow that said to him, Why are you so sad, my friend?'

'Because,' said the dog, 'I am very very hungry, and have nothing to eat.'



'If that be all,' answered the sparrow, 'come with me into the next town, and I will soon find you plenty of food.' So on they went together into the town, and as they passed by a butcher's shop, the sparrow said to the dog, 'Stand there a little while till I peck you down a piece of meat.' So the sparrow perched upon the shelf, and having first looked carefully about her to see if anyone was watching her, she pecked and scratched at a steak that lay upon the edge of the shelf, till at last down it fell. Then the dog snapped it up, and scrambled away with it into a corner, where he soon ate it all up. 'Well,' said the sparrow, 'you shall have some more if you will; so come with me to the next shop, and I will peck you down another steak.' When the dog had eaten this too, the sparrow said to him, 'Well, my good friend, have you had enough now?'

'I have had plenty of meat,' answered he, 'but I should like to have a piece of bread to eat after it.'

'Come with me then,' said the sparrow, 'and you shall soon have that too.' So she took him to a baker's shop, and pecked at two rolls that lay in the window, till they fell down; and as the dog still wished for more, she took him to another shop and pecked down some more for him.

When they were eaten, the sparrow asked him whether he had had enough now. 'Yes,' said he; 'and now let us take a walk a little way out of the town.' So they both went out upon the high road; but as the weather was warm, they had not gone far before the dog said, 'I am very much tired – I should like to take a nap.'

'Very well,' answered the sparrow, 'do so, and in the meantime I will perch upon that bush.' So the dog stretched himself out on the road, and fell fast asleep. While he slept, there came by a carter with a cart drawn by three horses, and loaded with two casks of wine. The sparrow, seeing that the carter did not turn out of the way but would go on in the track in which the dog lay so as to drive over him, called out, 'Stop! stop, Mr Carter! or it shall be the worse for you.'

But the carter, grumbling to himself, 'You make it the worse for me, indeed! What can you do?' cracked his whip, and drove his cart over the poor dog, so that the wheels crushed him to death.

'There,' cried the sparrow, 'thou cruel villain, thou hast killed my friend the dog. Now mind what I say. This deed of thine shall cost thee all thou art worth.'

'Do your worst, and welcome,' said the brute, 'what harm can you do me?' and passed on. But the sparrow crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked at the bung of one of the casks till she loosened it; and then all the wine ran out, without the carter seeing it. At last he looked round, and saw that the cart was dripping, and the cask quite empty. 'What an unlucky wretch I am!' cried he.

'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow, as she alighted upon the head of one of the horses, and pecked at him till he reared up and kicked. When the carter saw this, he drew out his hatchet and aimed a blow at the sparrow, meaning to kill her; but she flew away, and the blow fell upon the poor horse's head with such force that he fell down dead. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' cried he.

'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow. And as the carter went on with the other two horses, she again crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked out the bung of the second cask, so that all the wine ran out. When the carter saw this, he again cried out, 'Miserable wretch that I am!'

But the sparrow answered, 'Not wretch enough yet!' and perched on the head of the second horse, and pecked at him too. The carter ran up and struck at her again with his hatchet; but away she flew, and the blow fell upon the second horse and killed him on the spot.

'Unlucky wretch that I am!' said he.

'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow; and perching upon the third horse, she began to peck him too. The carter was mad with fury, and without looking about him, or caring what he was about, struck again at the sparrow and killed his third horse as he had done the other two. 'Alas! miserable wretch that I am!' cried he.

'Not wretch enough yet!' answered the sparrow as she flew away; 'now will I plague and punish thee at thy own house.'

The carter was forced at last to leave his cart behind him, and to go home overflowing with rage and vexation. 'Alas!' said he to his wife, 'what ill luck has befallen me! – my wine is all spilt, and my horses all three dead.'

'Alas! husband,' replied she, 'and a wicked bird has come into the house, and has brought with her all the birds in the world, I am sure, and they have fallen upon our corn in the loft, and are eating it up at such a rate!' Away ran the husband upstairs, and saw thousands of birds sitting upon the floor eating up his corn, with the sparrow in the midst of them. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' cried the carter; for he saw that the corn was almost all gone.

'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow; 'thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life yet!' and away she flew.

The carter seeing that he had thus lost all that he had, went down into his kitchen; and was still not sorry for what he had done, but sat himself angrily and sulkily in the chimney corner.

But the sparrow sat on the outside of the window, and cried 'Carter! Thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life!'

With that he jumped up in a rage, seized his hatchet, and threw it at the sparrow; but it missed her, and only broke the window.

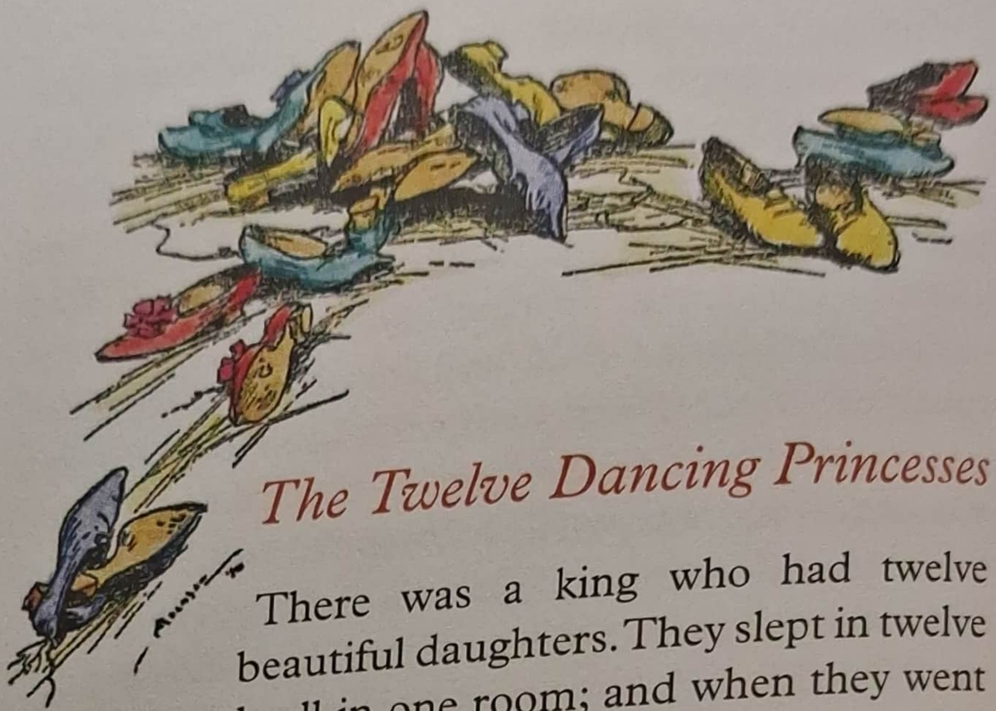
The sparrow now hopped in, perched upon the window-seat, and cried, ‘Carter! It shall cost thee thy life!’

Then he became mad and blind with rage, and struck the window-seat with such force that he cleft it in two: and as the sparrow flew from place to place, the carter and his wife were so furious that they broke all their furniture, glasses, chairs, benches, the table and at last the walls, without touching the bird at all. In the end, however, they caught her and the wife said, ‘Shall I kill her at once?’

‘No,’ cried he, ‘that is letting her off too easily; she shall die a much more cruel death: I will eat her.’

But the sparrow began to flutter about, and stretch out her neck and cried, ‘Carter! It shall cost thee thy life yet!’

With that he could wait no longer, so he gave his wife the hatchet, and cried, ‘Wife, strike at the bird and kill her in my hand.’ And the wife struck; but she missed her aim, and hit her husband on the head so that he fell down dead, and the sparrow flew quietly home to her nest.



The Twelve Dancing Princesses

There was a king who had twelve beautiful daughters. They slept in twelve beds all in one room; and when they went to bed, the doors were shut and locked up; but every morning their shoes were found to be quite worn through as if they had been danced in all night; and yet nobody could find out how it happened, or where they had been.

Then the king made it known to all the land that if any man could discover the secret, and find out where it was that the princesses danced in the night, he should have the one he liked best for his wife, and should be king after his death; but whoever tried and did not succeed, after three days and nights should be put to death.

A king's son soon came. He was well entertained, and in the evening was taken to the chamber next to the one where the princesses lay in their twelve beds. There he was to sit and watch where they went to dance; and, in order that nothing might pass without his hearing it, the door of his chamber was left open. But the king's son soon fell asleep; and when he awoke in the morning he found that the princesess had all been dancing, for the soles of their shoes were full of holes. The same thing happened the second and third night, so the king ordered his head to be cut off. After him came several others; but they had all the same luck, and all lost their lives in the same manner.

Now it chanced that an old soldier, who had been wounded in battle and could fight no longer, passed through the country where this king reigned, and as he was travelling through a wood, he met an old woman, who asked him where he was going. 'I hardly know where I am going, or what I had better do,' said the soldier; 'but I think I should like very well to find out where it is that the princesses dance, and then in time I might be a king.'

'Well,' said the old dame, 'that is no very hard task, only take care not to drink any of the wine which one of the princesses will bring to you in the evening; and as soon as she leaves you pretend to be fast asleep.' Then she gave him a cloak, and said, 'As soon as you put that on you will become invisible, and you will then be able to follow the princesses wherever they go.'

When the soldier heard all this good counsel, he determined to try his luck: so he went to the king, and said he was willing to undertake the task. He was as well received as the others had been, and the king ordered fine royal robes to be given him; and when the evening came he was led to the outer chamber. Just as he was going to lie down, the eldest of the princesses brought him a cup of wine; but the soldier threw it all away secretly, taking care not to drink a drop. Then he laid himself down on his bed, and in a little while began to snore very loud as if he was fast asleep.

When the twelve princesses heard this they laughed heartily; and the eldest said, 'This fellow too might have done a wiser thing than lose his life in this way!'

Then they rose up and opened their drawers and boxes, and took out all their fine clothes, and dressed themselves at the glass, and skipped about as if they were eager to begin dancing. But the youngest said, 'I don't know why it is, but while you are all so happy I feel very uneasy; I am sure some mischance will befall us.'

'You simpleton,' said the eldest, 'you are always afraid; have you forgotten how many kings' sons have already watched in vain? And as for this soldier, even if I had not given him his sleeping draught, he would have slept soundly enough.'

When they were all ready, they went and looked at the soldier; but he snored on, and did not stir hand or foot, so they thought they were quite safe; and the eldest went up to her own bed and clapped her hands, and the bed sank into the floor and a trap-door flew open. The soldier saw them going down through the trap-door one after another, the eldest leading the way; and thinking he had no time to lose, he jumped up, put on the cloak which the old woman had given him, and followed them; but in the middle of the stairs he trod on the gown of the youngest princess, and she cried out to her sisters, 'All is not right; someone took hold of my gown.'

'You silly creature!' said the eldest, 'it is nothing but a nail in the wall.'

Then down they all went, and at the bottom they found themselves in a most delightful grove of trees; and the leaves were all of silver, and glittered and sparkled beautifully. The soldier wished to take away some token of the place; so he broke off a little branch, and there came a loud noise from the tree. Then the youngest daughter said again, ‘I am sure all is not right – did not you hear that noise? That never happened before.’

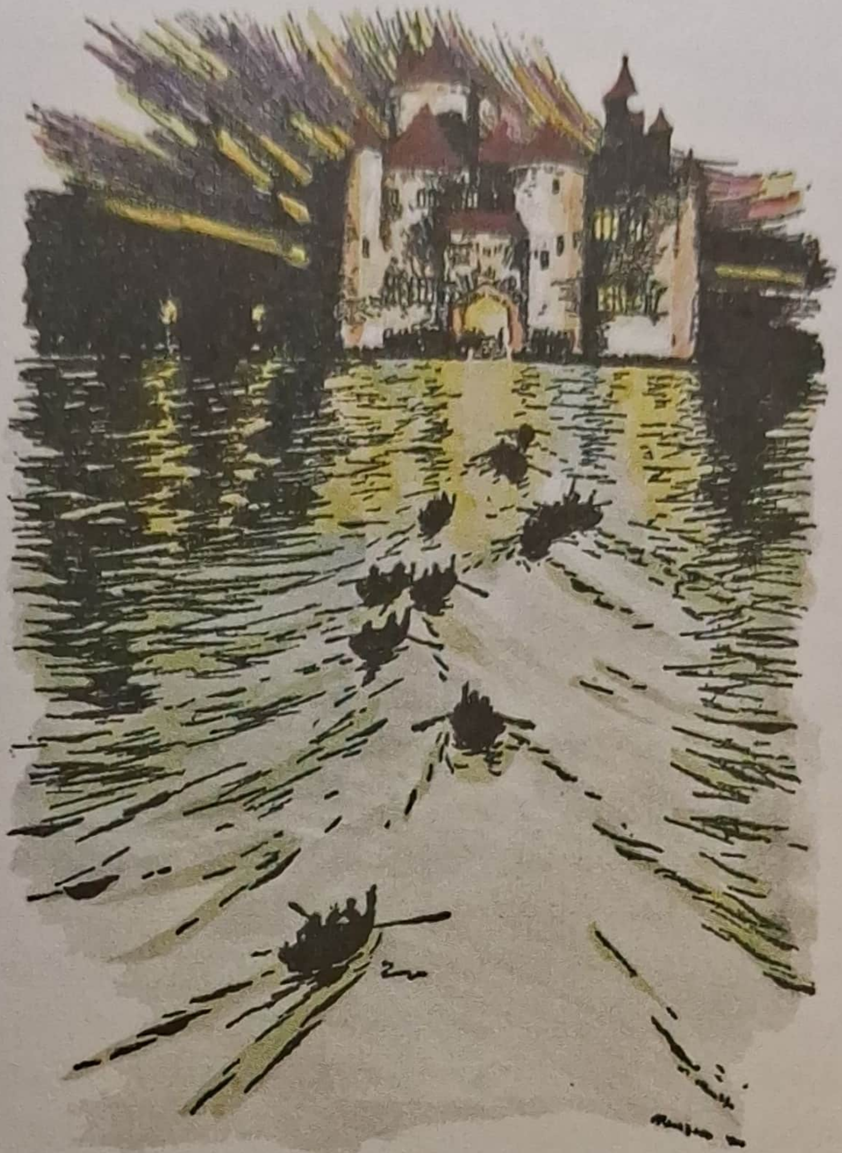
But the eldest said, ‘It is only our princes, who are shouting for joy at our approach.’

Then they came to another grove of trees, where all the leaves were of gold; and afterwards to a third, where the leaves were all glittering diamonds. And the soldier broke a branch from each; and every time there was a loud noise, which made the youngest sister tremble with fear; but the eldest still said, it was only the princes, who were crying for joy. So they went on till they came to a great lake; and at the side of the lake there lay twelve little boats with twelve handsome princes in them, who seemed to be waiting there for the princesses.

One of the princesses went into each boat, and the soldier stepped into the same boat as the youngest. As they were rowing over the lake, the prince who was in the boat with the youngest princess and the soldier said, ‘I do not know why it is, but though I am rowing with all my might we do not get on so fast as usual, and I am quite tired: the boat seems very heavy today.’

‘It is only the heat of the weather,’ said the princess. ‘I feel very warm too.’

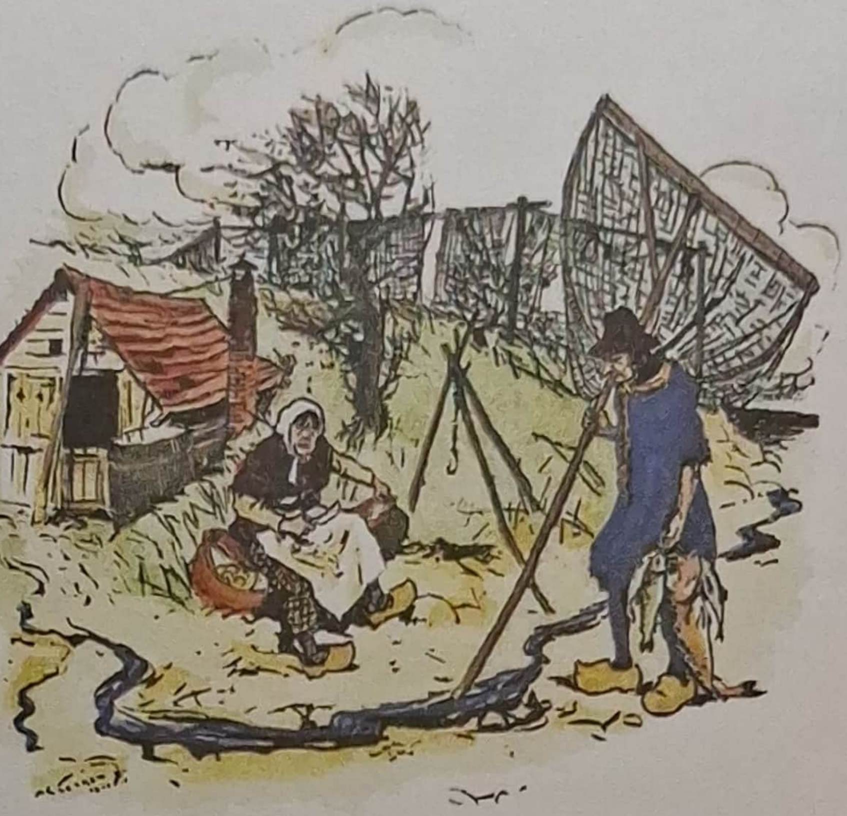
On the other side of the lake stood a fine illuminated castle, from which came the merry music of horns and trumpets. There they all landed, and went into the castle, and each prince danced with his princess; and the soldier, who was all the time



invisible, danced with them too; and when any of the princesses had a cup of wine set by her, he drank it all up, so that when she put the cup to her mouth it was empty. At this, too, the youngest sister was terribly frightened, but the eldest always silenced her. They danced on till three o'clock in the morning, and then all their shoes were worn out, so that they were obliged to leave off. The princes rowed them back again over the lake (but this time the soldier placed himself in the boat with the eldest princess); and on the opposite shore they took leave of each other, the princesses promising to come again the next night.

When they came to the stairs, the soldier ran on before the princesses, and laid himself down; and as the twelve sisters slowly came up, very much tired, they heard him snoring in his bed; so they said, 'Now all is quite safe;' then they undressed themselves, put away their fine clothes, pulled off their shoes, and went to bed. In the morning the soldier said nothing about what had happened, but determined to see more of this strange adventure, and went again the second and third night; and everything happened just as before; the princesses danced each time till their shoes were worn to pieces, and then returned home. However, on the third night the soldier carried away one of the golden cups as a token of where he had been.

As soon as the time came when he was to declare the secret, he was taken before the king with the three branches and the golden cup; and the twelve princesses stood listening behind the door to hear what he would say. And when the king asked him. 'Where do my twelve daughters dance at night?' he answered, 'With twelve princes in a castle under ground.' And then he told the king all that had happened, and showed him the three branches and the golden cup which he had brought with him. Then the king called for the princesses, and asked them whether what the soldier said was true; and when they saw that they were discovered, and that it was of no use to deny what had happened, they confessed it all. And the king asked the soldier which of them he would choose for his wife; and he answered, 'I am not very young, so I will have the eldest.' And they were married that very day, and the soldier was chosen to be the king's heir.



The Fisherman and His Wife

There was once a fisherman who lived with his wife in a pigsty, close by the seaside. The fisherman used to go out fishing all day long, and one day, as he sat on the shore with his rod, looking at the sparkling waves and watching his line, all of a sudden his float was dragged away deep into the water, and in drawing it up he pulled out a great fish. But the fish said, 'Pray let me live! I am not a real fish; I am an enchanted prince. Put me in the water again, and let me go!'

'Oh, ho!' said the man, 'you need not make so many words about the matter; I will have nothing to do with a fish that can talk; so swim away, sir, as soon as you please!' Then he put him back into the water, and the fish darted straight down to the bottom, and left a long streak of blood behind him on the wave.

When the fisherman went home to his wife in the pigsty, he told her how he had caught a great fish, and how it had told him it was an enchanted prince, and how, on hearing it speak, he had let it go again. 'Did you not ask it for anything?' said the wife. 'We live very wretchedly here, in this nasty dirty pigsty; do go back and tell the fish we want a snug little cottage.'

The fisherman did not much like the business: however, he went back to the seashore; and when he got there the water looked all yellow and green. And he stood at the water's edge, and said:

O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

Then the fish came swimming to him, and said, 'Well, what is her will? What does your wife want?'

'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'she says that when I had caught you, I ought to have asked you for something before I let you go; she does not like living any longer in the pigsty, and wants a snug little cottage.'

'Go home, then,' said the fish; 'she is in the cottage already!' So the man went home, and saw his wife standing at the door of a nice trim little cottage. 'Come in, come in!' said she. 'Is not this much better than the filthy pigsty we had?' And there was a parlour, and a bedchamber, and a kitchen; and behind the cottage there was a little garden, planted with all sorts of flowers and fruits; and there was a courtyard behind, full of ducks and chickens.

'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'how happily we shall live now!'

'We will try to do so, at least,' said his wife.

Everything went right for a week or two, and then Dame Ilsabill said, 'Husband, there is not nearly room enough for us in this cottage; the courtyard and the garden are a great deal too small; I should like to have a large stone castle to live in. Go to the fish again and tell him to give us a castle.'

'Wife,' said the fisherman, 'I don't like to go to him again, for perhaps he will be angry; we ought to be content with this pretty cottage to live in.'

'Nonsense!' said the wife; 'he will do it very willingly, I know; go along and try!'

The fisherman went, but his heart was very heavy: and when he came to the sea, it looked blue and gloomy, though it was very calm; and he went close to the edge of the waves, and said:

O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'Well, what does she want now?' said the fish.

'Ah!' said the man, dolefully, 'my wife wants to live in a stone castle.'

'Go home, then,' said the fish; 'she is standing at the gate of it already.'

So away went the fisherman, and found his wife standing before the gate of a great castle. 'See,' said she, 'is not this grand?'

With that they went into the castle together, and found a great many servants there, and the rooms all richly furnished, and full of golden chairs and tables; and behind the castle was a garden, and around it was a park half a mile long, full of sheep, and goats, and hares, and deer; and in the courtyard were stables and cow-houses.

'Well,' said the man, 'now we will live cheerful and happy in this beautiful castle for the rest of our lives.'

'Perhaps we may,' said the wife; 'but let us sleep upon it, before we make up our minds to that.' So they went to bed.

The next morning when Dame Ilsabill awoke it was broad daylight, and she jogged the fisherman with her elbow, and said, 'Get up, husband, and bestir yourself, for we must be king of all the land.'

'Wife, wife,' said the man, 'why should we wish to be the king? I will not be king.'

'Then I will,' said she.

'But, wife,' said the fisherman, 'how can you be king – the fish cannot make you a king!'

'Husband,' said she, 'say no more about it, but go and try! I will be king.'

So the man went away quite sorrowful to think that his wife should want to be king. This time the sea looked a dark grey colour, and was overspread with curling waves with ridges of foam as he cried out:

O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'Well, what would she have now?' said the fish.
'Alas!' said the poor man, 'my wife wants to be king.'

'Go home,' said the fish; 'she is king already.'

Then the fisherman went home; and as he came close to the palace he saw a troop of soldiers, and heard the sound of drums and trumpets. And when he went in he saw his wife sitting on a throne of gold and diamonds, with a golden crown upon her head; and on each side of her stood six fair maidens, each a head taller than the other. 'Well, wife,' said the fisherman, 'are you king?'

'Yes,' said she, 'I am king.'

And when he had looked at her for a long time, he said, 'Ah, wife! What a fine thing it is to be king! Now we shall never have anything more to wish for as long as we live.'

'I don't know how that may be,' said she; 'never is a long time. I am king, it is true; but I begin to be tired of that, and I think I should like to be emperor.'

'Alas, wife! Why should you wish to be emperor?' said the fisherman.

'Husband,' said she, 'go to the fish! I say I will be emperor.'

'Ah, wife!' replied the fisherman, 'the fish cannot make an emperor, I am sure, and I should not like to ask him for such a thing.'

'I am king,' said Ilsabill, 'and you are my slave; so go at once!'

So the fisherman was forced to go; and he muttered as he went along, 'This will come to no good, it is too much to ask; the fish will be tired at last, and then we shall be sorry for what we have done.'

He soon came to the seashore; and the water was quite black and muddy, and a mighty whirlwind blew over the waves and rolled them about, but he went as near as he could to the water's brink, and said:

O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

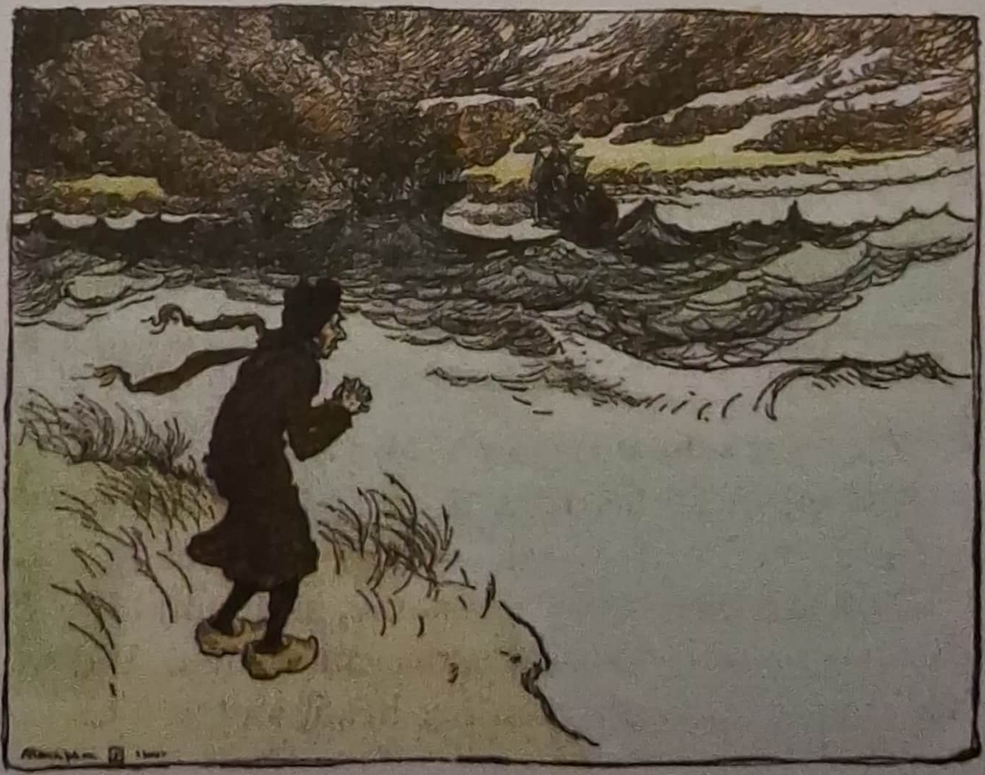
'What would she have now?' said the fish.

'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'she wants to be emperor.'

'Go home,' said the fish; 'she is emperor already.'

So he went home again; and as he came near he saw his wife Ilsabill sitting on a very lofty throne made of solid gold, with a great crown on her head full two yards high; and on each side of her stood her guards and attendants in a row, each one smaller than the other, from the tallest giant down to a little dwarf no bigger than my finger. And before her stood princes, and dukes, and earls; and the fisherman went up to her and said, 'Wife, are you emperor?'

'Yes,' said she, 'I am emperor.'



'Ah!' said the man, as he gazed upon her, 'what a fine thing it is to be emperor!'

'Husband,' said she, 'why should we stop at being emperor? I will be pope next.'

'O wife, wife!' said he, 'how can you be pope? There is but one pope at a time in Christendom.'

'Husband,' said she, 'I will be pope this very day.'

'But,' replied the husband, 'the fish cannot make you pope.'

'What nonsense!' said she; 'if he can make an emperor, he can make a pope. Go and try him.'

So the fisherman went. But when he came to the shore the wind was raging and the sea was tossed up and down in boiling waves, and the ships were in trouble, and rolled fearfully upon the tops of the billows. In the middle of the heavens there was a little piece of blue sky, but towards the south all was red, as if a dreadful storm was rising. At this sight the fisherman was dreadfully frightened, and he trembled so that his knees knocked together, but still he went down near to the shore, and said:

O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'What does she want now?' said the fish.

'Ah!' said the fisherman, 'my wife wants to be pope.'

'Go home,' said the fish; 'she is pope already.'

Then the fisherman went home, and found Ilsabill sitting on a throne that was two miles high. And she had three great crowns on her head, and around her stood all the pomp and power of the Church. And on each side of her were two rows of burning lights, of all sizes, the greatest as large as the highest and biggest tower in the world, and the least no larger than a small rushlight.

'Wife,' said the fisherman, as he looked at all this greatness, 'are you pope?'

'Yes,' said she, 'I am pope.'

'Well, wife,' replied he, 'it is a grand thing to be pope; and now you must be content, for you can be nothing greater.'

'I will think about that,' said the wife. Then they went to bed, but Dame Ilsabill could not sleep all night for thinking what she should be next. At last, just as she was falling asleep, morning broke and the sun rose. 'Ha!' thought she, as she woke up and looked at it through the window, 'after all I cannot prevent the sun rising.'

At this thought she was very angry, and wakened her husband, and said, 'Husband, go to the fish and tell him I must be lord of the sun and moon.'

The fisherman was half asleep, but the thought frightened him so much that he started and fell out of bed. 'Alas, wife!' said he, 'can you not be content with being pope?'

'No,' said she, 'I am very uneasy as long as the sun and moon rise without my leave. Go to the fish at once!'

Then the man went shivering with fear; and as he was going down to the shore a dreadful storm arose, so that the trees and the very rocks shook. And all the heavens became black with stormy clouds, and the lightning played and the thunder rolled; and you might have seen in the sea great black waves, swelling up like mountains with crowns of white foam upon their heads. And the fisherman crept towards the sea, and cried out, as well as he could:

O man of the sea!
Hearken to me!
My wife Ilsabill
Will have her own will,
And hath sent me to beg a boon of thee!'

'What does she want now?' said the fish.

'Ah!' said he, 'she wants to be lord of the sun and moon.'

'Go home,' said the fish, 'to your pigsty again.'

And there they live to this very day.

The Willow-Wren and the Bear

Once in summertime the bear and the wolf were walking in the forest, and the bear heard a bird singing so beautifully that he said: 'Brother wolf, what bird is it that sings so well?'

'That is the king of birds,' said the wolf, 'before whom we must bow down.' In reality the bird was the willow-wren.

'If that's the case,' said the bear, 'I should very much like to see his royal palace; come, take me thither.'

'That is not done quite as you seem to think,' said the wolf; 'you must wait until the queen comes.'

Soon afterwards, the queen arrived with some food in her beak, and the lord king came too, and they began to feed their young ones.

The bear would have liked to go at once, but the wolf held him back by the sleeve, and said: 'No, you must wait until the lord and lady queen have gone away again.' So they took stock of the hole where the nest lay, and trotted away.

The bear, however, could not rest until he had seen the royal palace, and when a short time had passed he went to it again. The king and queen had just flown out, so he peeped in and saw five or six young ones lying there. 'Is that the royal palace?' cried the bear; 'it is a wretched palace, and you are not king's children, you are disreputable children!'

When the young wrens heard that, they were frightfully angry, and screamed: 'No, that we are not! Our parents are honest people! Bear, you will have to pay for that!'

The bear grew uneasy and went back to his hole.

The young willow-wrens, however, continued to cry and scream, and when their parents again brought food they said: 'We will not so much as touch one fly's leg, no, not if we were dying of hunger, until you have settled whether we are respectable children or not; the bear has been here and has insulted us!'

Then the old king said: 'Be easy, he shall be punished,' and he at once flew with the queen to the bear's cave, and called in: 'Old Growler, why have you insulted my children? You shall suffer for it – we will punish you with a bloody war.'

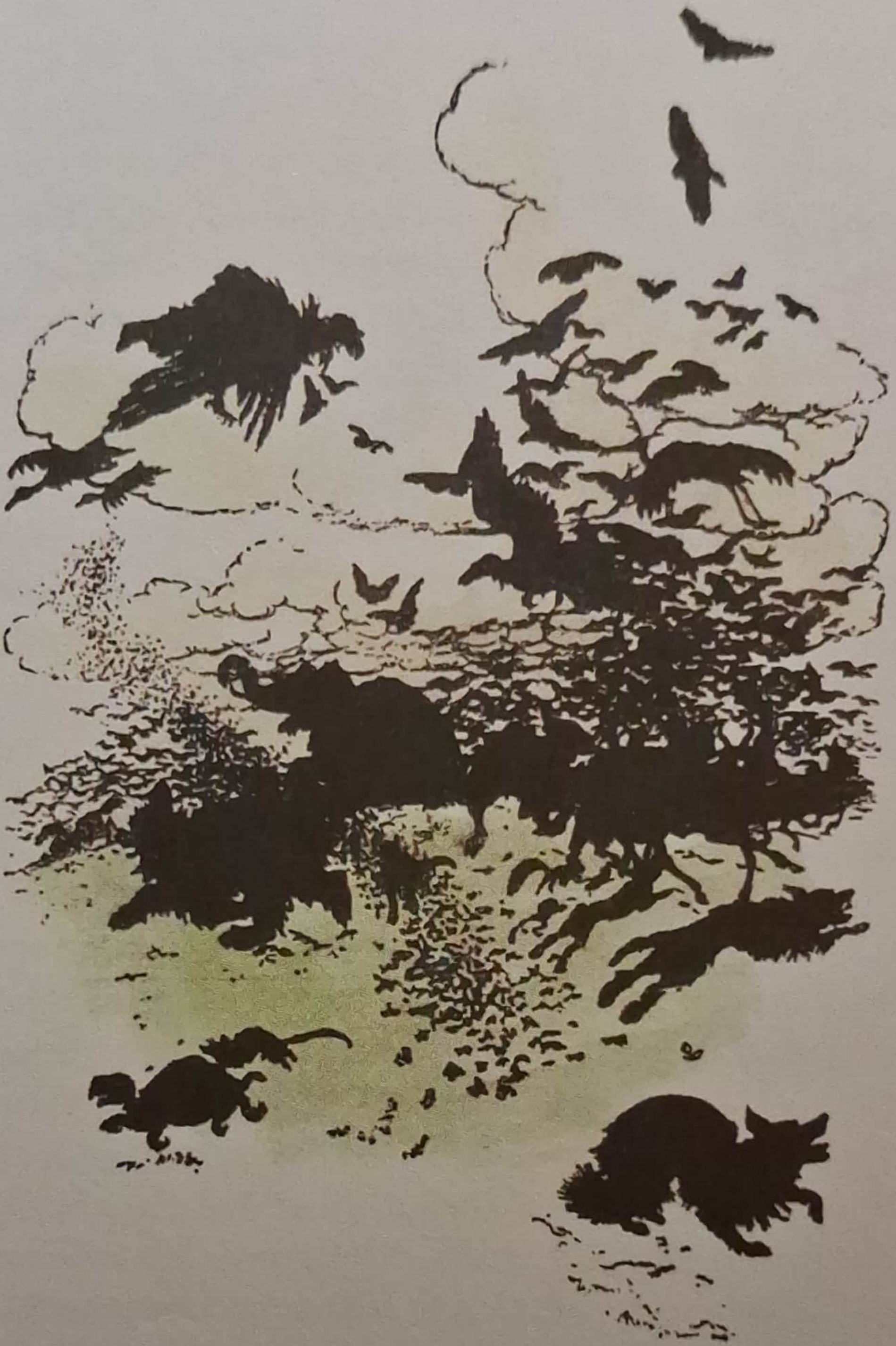
Thus war was announced to the bear, and all four-footed animals were summoned to take part in it: oxen, asses, cows, deer, and every other animal the earth contained. And the willow-wren summoned everything which flew in the air; not only birds, large and small, but midges and hornets, bees and flies had to come.

When the time came for the war to begin, the willow-wren sent out spies to discover who was the enemy's commander-in-chief. The gnat, who was the most crafty, flew into the forest where the enemy was assembled, and hid herself beneath a leaf of a tree.

There stood the bear, and he called the fox before him and said: 'Fox, you are the most cunning of all animals, you shall be general and lead us.'

'Good,' said the fox, 'but what signal shall we agree upon?' No one spoke, so the fox said: 'I have a fine long bushy tail, which almost looks like a plume of red feathers. When I lift my tail up quite high, all is going well, and you must charge; but if I let it hang down, run away as fast as you can.'

When the gnat had heard that, she flew away



again, and revealed everything, down to the minutest detail, to the willow-wren. When day broke, and the battle was to begin, all the four-footed animals came running up with such a noise that the earth trembled. The willow-wren with his army also came flying through the air with such a humming, and whirring, and swarming that everyone was uneasy and afraid, and on both sides they advanced against each other. But the willow-wren sent down the hornet, with orders to settle beneath the fox's tail, and sting with all his might. When the fox felt the first string, he winced with pain, but he bore it, and still kept his tail high in the air; at the second sting, he was forced to put it down for a moment; at the third, he could hold out no longer, screamed, and put his tail between his legs. When the animals saw that, they thought all was lost, and began to flee, each into his hole, and the birds had won the battle.

Then the king and queen flew home to their children and cried: 'Children, rejoice, eat and drink to your heart's content, we have won the battle!'

But the young wrens said: 'We will not eat yet, the bear must come to the nest, and beg for pardon and say that we are honourable children, before we will do that.'

Then the willow-wren flew to the bear's hole and cried: 'Growler, you are to come to the nest to my children, and beg their pardon, or else every rib of your body shall be broken.'

So the bear crept thither in the greatest fear, and begged their pardon. And then at last the young wrens were satisfied, and sat down together and ate and drank, and made merry till quite late into the night.

The Frog Prince

One fine evening, a young princess put on her bonnet and clogs, and went out to take a walk by herself in a wood; and when she came to a cool spring of water, that rose in the midst of it, she sat herself down to rest a while. Now she had a golden ball in her hand, which was her favourite plaything; and she was always tossing it up into the air, and catching it again as it fell. After a time she threw it up so high that she missed catching it as it fell, and the ball bounded away, and rolled along upon the ground, till at last it fell down into the spring. The princess looked into the spring after her ball, but it was very deep, so deep that she could not see the bottom of it. Then she began to bewail her loss, and said, 'Alas! if I could only get my ball again, I would give all my fine clothes and jewels, and everything that I have in the world.'

While she was speaking, a frog put his head out of the water, and said, 'Princess, why do you weep so bitterly?'

'Alas!' said she, 'what can you do for me, you nasty frog? My golden ball has fallen into the spring.'

The frog said, 'I want not your pearls, and jewels, and fine clothes; but if you will love me, and let me live with you and eat from off your golden plate and sleep upon your bed, I will bring you your ball again.'

'What nonsense,' thought the princess, 'this silly frog is talking! He can never even get out of the spring to visit me, though he may be able to get my ball for me, and therefore I will tell him he shall have what he asks.' So she said to the frog, 'Well, if you will bring me my ball, I will do all you ask.'

Then the frog put his head down, and dived deep under the water; and after a little while he came up again, with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on to the edge of the spring. As soon as the young princess saw her ball, she ran to pick it up; and she was so overjoyed to have it in her hand again, that she never thought of the frog, but ran home with it as fast as she could. The frog called after her, 'Stay, princess, and take me with you as you said,' but she did not stop to hear a word.

The next day, just as the princess had sat down to dinner, she heard a strange noise – tap, tap – plash, plash – as if something was coming up the marble staircase, and soon afterwards there was a gentle knock at the door, and a little voice cried out and said:

'Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
Remember the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.'

Then the princess ran to the door and opened it, and there she saw the frog, whom she had quite forgotten. At this sight she was sadly frightened, and shutting the door as fast as she could came back to her seat. The king, her father, seeing that something had frightened her, asked her what was the matter. 'There is a nasty frog,' said she, 'at the door, that lifted my ball for me out of the spring last evening. I told him that he should live with me here, thinking that he could never get out of the spring; but there he is at the door, and he wants to come in.'

While she was speaking the frog knocked again at the door, and said:

'Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
Remember the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.'

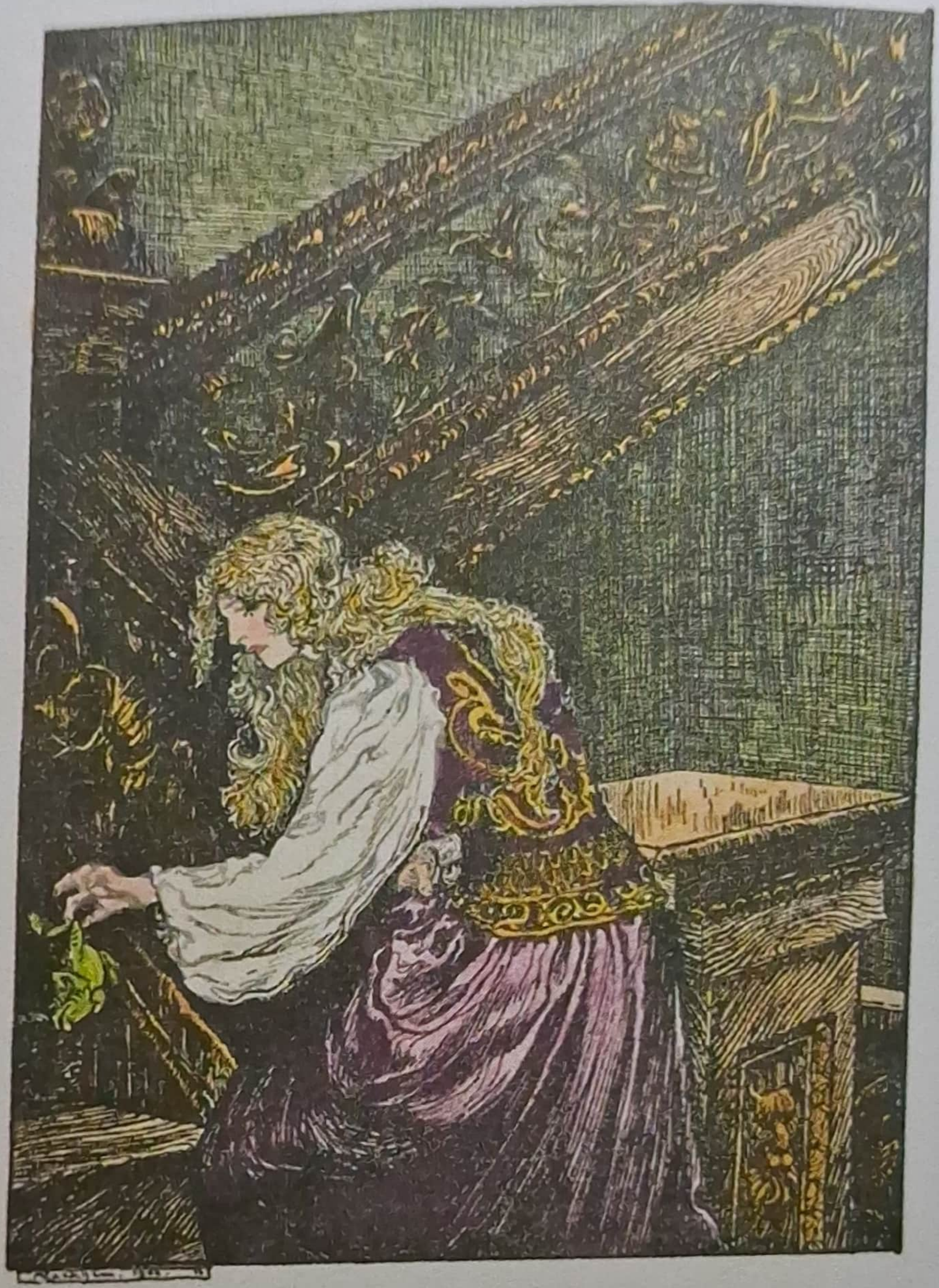
Then the king said to the young princess, 'As you have given your word you must keep it; so go and let him in.' She did so, and the frog hopped into the room, and then straight on – tap, tap – plash, plash – from the bottom of the room to the top, till he came up close to the table where the princess sat. 'Pray lift me upon chair,' said he to the princess, 'and let me sit next to you.' As soon as she had done this, the frog said, 'Put your plate nearer to me, that I may eat from it.' This she did, and when he had eaten as much as he could, he said, 'Now I am tired; carry me upstairs, and put me into your bed.' And the princess, though very unwilling, took him up in her hand, and put him upon the pillow of her own bed, where he slept all night long.

As soon as it was light he jumped up, hopped downstairs, and went out of the house. 'Now, then,' thought the princess, 'at last he is gone, and I shall be troubled with him no more.'

But she was mistaken; for when night came again she heard the same tapping at the door; and the frog came once more, and said:

'Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
Remember the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.'

And when the princess opened the door the frog came in, ate with her and slept upon her pillow as



before, till the morning broke. And the third night he did the same.

But when the princess awoke on the following morning she was astonished to see, instead of the frog, a handsome prince, gazing on her with the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen, and standing at the head of her bed.

He told her that he had been enchanted by a spiteful fairy, who had changed him into a frog; and that he had been fated so to abide till some princess should take him out of the spring, and let him eat from her plate, and sleep upon her bed for three nights. 'You,' said the prince, 'have broken his cruel charm, and now I have nothing to wish for but that you should go with me into my father's kingdom, where I will marry you, and love you as long as you live.'

The young princess, you may be sure, was not long in giving her consent; and as they spoke a magnificent coach drove up, drawn by eight beautiful horses, decked with plumes of feathers and golden harness; and behind the coach rode the prince's servant, faithful Heinrich, who had bewailed the misfortunes of his dear master during his enchantment so long and so bitterly that his heart had well-nigh burst.

They then took leave of the king, and got into the coach, and all set out, full of joy and merriment, for the prince's kingdom, which they reached safely; and there they lived happily a great many years.

Cat and Mouse in Partnership

A certain cat had made the acquaintance of a mouse, and had said so much to her about the great love and friendship she felt for her, that at length the mouse agreed that they should live and keep house together. 'But we must make a provision for winter, or else we shall suffer from hunger,' said the cat; 'and you, little mouse, cannot venture everywhere, or you will be caught in a trap someday.'

The good advice was followed, and a pot of fat was bought, but they did not know where to put it. At length, after much consideration, the cat said: 'I know no place where it will be better stored up than in the church, for no one dares take anything away from there. We will set it beneath the altar, and not touch it until we are really in need of it.'

So the pot was placed in safety but it was not long before the cat had a great yearning for it, and said to the mouse: 'I want to tell you something, little mouse; my cousin has brought a little son into the world, and has asked me to be godmother; he is white with brown

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spots, and I am to hold him over the font at the christening. Let me go out today, and you look after the house by yourself.'

'Yes, yes,' answered the mouse, 'by all means go, and if you get anything very good to eat, think of me. I should like a drop of sweet red christening wine myself.'

All this, however, was untrue; the cat had no cousin, and had not been asked to be godmother. She went straight to the church, stole to the pot of fat and began to lick at it until she had licked the top layer off. Then she took a walk upon the roofs of the town, looked out for opportunities, and then stretched herself in the sun, and licked her lips whenever she thought of the pot of fat. Not until it was evening did she return home.

'Well, here you are again,' said the mouse, 'no doubt you have had a merry day.'

'All went off well,' answered the cat.

'What name did they give the child?'

'Top-off!' said the cat quite coolly.

'Top-off!' cried the mouse. 'That is a very odd and uncommon name – is it a usual one in your family?'

'So what if it is,' said the cat, 'it is no worse than Crumb-stealer, as your godchildren are called.'

Before long the cat was seized by another fit of yearning. She said to the mouse: 'You must do me a favour, and once more manage the house for a day alone. I am again asked to be godmother, and as the child has a white ring round its neck, I cannot refuse.'

The good mouse consented, but the cat crept behind the town walls to the church, and devoured half the pot of fat. 'Nothing ever seems so good as what one keeps to oneself,' said she, and was quite satisfied with her day's work.

When she went home the mouse enquired: 'And what was the child christened?

'Half-done,' answered the cat.

'Half-done! What are you saying? I never heard the name in my life. I'll wager anything it is not in any dictionary of names!'

The cat's mouth soon began to water for some more licking. 'All good things go in threes,' said she. 'I am asked to stand godmother again. The child is quite black; it does have white paws, but with that exception, it has not a single white hair on its whole body; this only happens once every few years; you will let me go, won't you?'

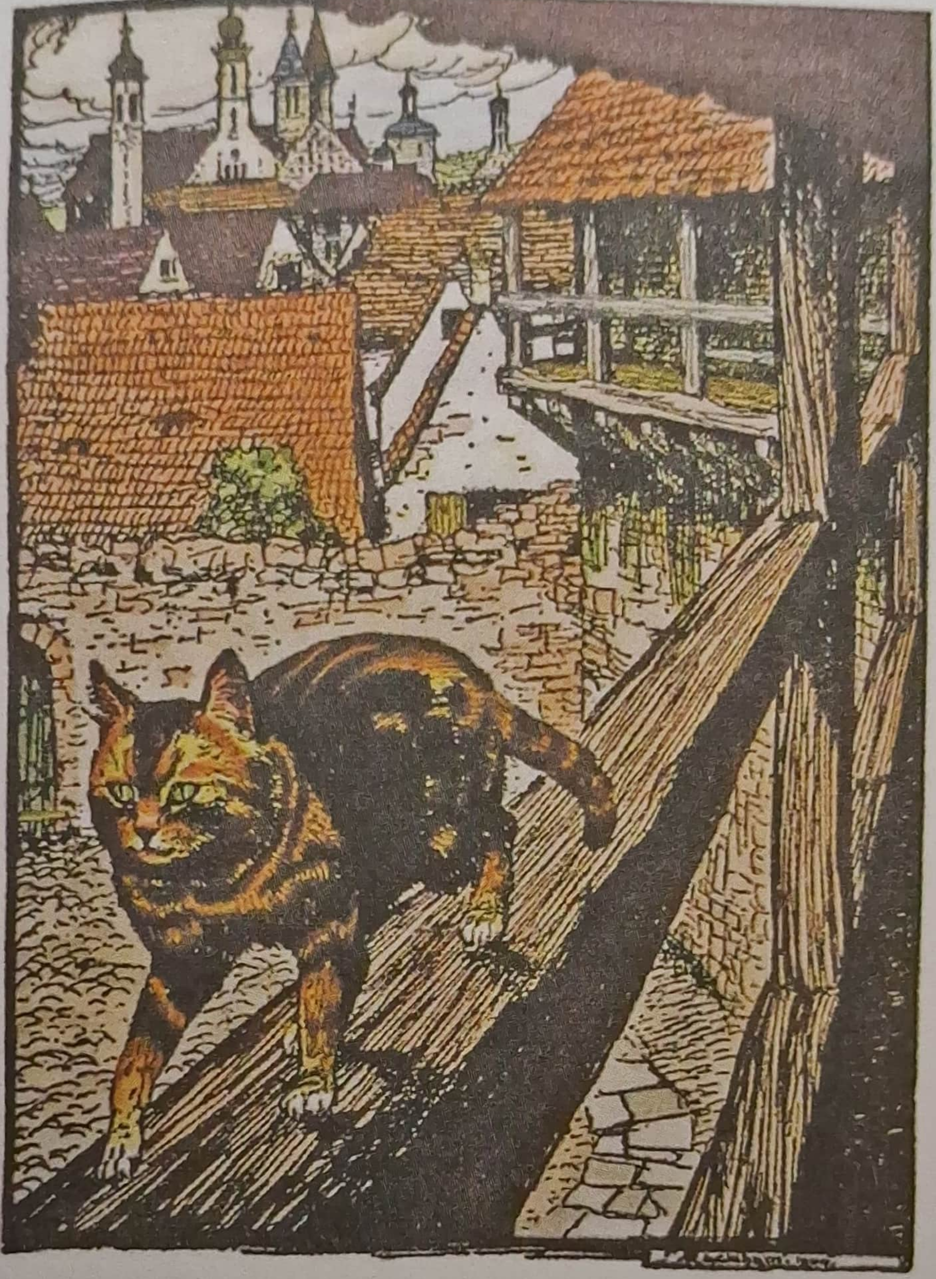
'Top-off! Half-done!' answered the mouse. 'They are such odd names, they make me very thoughtful.'

'You sit at home,' said the cat, 'in your dark-grey fur coat and long tail, and are filled with fancies; that's because you do not go out in the daytime.' During the cat's absence the mouse cleaned the house, and put it in order, but the greedy cat entirely emptied the pot of fat. 'When everything is eaten up one has some peace,' said she to herself, and well filled and sleek she did not return home till night.

The mouse at once asked what name had been given to the third child. 'It will not please you more than the others,' said the cat. 'He is called All-gone.'

'All-gone,' cried the mouse. 'That is the most suspicious name of all! I have never seen it in print. All-gone; what can that mean?' and she shook her head, curled herself up and lay down to sleep.

From this time forth no one invited the cat to be godmother, but when the winter had come and there



was no longer anything to be found outside, the mouse thought of their provision, and said: 'Come, cat, we will go to our pot of fat which we have stored up for ourselves – we shall enjoy that.'

'Yes,' answered the cat, 'you will enjoy it as much as you would enjoy sticking that dainty tongue of yours out of the window.'

They set out on their way, and when they arrived the pot certainly was still in its place, but it was empty.

'Alas!' said the mouse, 'now I see what has happened, now it comes to light! You are some true friend! You have devoured all when you were standing godmother. First Top-off, then Half-done, then — '

'Will you hold your tongue?' cried the cat. 'One word more, and I will eat you too.'

'All-gone' was already on the poor mouse's lips; scarcely had she spoken it before the cat sprang on her, seized her and swallowed her down. Verily, that is the way of the world.

The Goose Girl

The king of a great land died, and left his queen to take care of their only child. This child was a daughter, who was very beautiful; and her mother loved her dearly, and was very kind to her. And there was a good fairy too, who was fond of the princess, and helped her mother to watch over her. When she grew up, she was betrothed to a prince who lived a great way off; and as the time drew near for her to be married, she got ready to set off on her journey to his country. Then the queen her mother packed up a great many costly things: jewels, and gold, and silver; trinkets, and fine dresses, and in short everything that became a royal bride. And she gave her a waiting-maid to ride with her and give her into the bridegroom's hands; and each had a horse for the journey. Now the princess's horse was the fairy's gift, and it was called Falada, and could speak.

When the time came for them to set out, the fairy went into her bedchamber, and took a little knife, and cut off a lock of her hair, and gave it to the princess, and said, 'Take care of it, dear child; for it is a charm that may be of use to you on the road.' Then they all took a sorrowful leave of the princess; and she put the lock of hair into her bosom, got upon her horse, and set off on her journey to her bridegroom's kingdom.

One day, as they were riding along by a brook, the princess began to feel very thirsty: and she said to her maid, 'Pray get down and fetch me some water in my golden cup out of yonder brook, for I want to drink.'

'Nay,' said the maid, 'if you are thirsty, get off yourself, and stoop down by the water and drink; I shall not be your waiting-maid any longer.'

Then she was so thirsty that she got down, and knelt over the little brook, and drank; for she was frightened, and dared not bring out her golden cup; and she wept and said, 'Alas! what will become of me?'

And the lock answered her, and said:

'Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

But the princess was very gentle and meek, so she said nothing about her maid's ill behaviour, but got upon her horse again.

Then all rode farther on their journey, till the day grew so warm, and the sun so scorching, that the bride began to feel very thirsty again; and at last, when they came to a river, she forgot her maid's previous rude speech, and said, 'Pray get down, and fetch me some water to drink in my golden cup.'

But the maid answered her, and even spoke even more haughtily than before: 'Drink if you will, but I shall not be your waiting-maid.'

Then the princess was so thirsty that she got off her horse, and lay down, and held her head over the running stream, and cried and said, 'What will become of me?'

And the lock of hair answered her again:

'Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

And as she leaned down to drink, the lock of hair fell from her bosom, and floated away with the water.

Now she was so frightened that she did not see it; but her maid saw it, and was very glad, for she knew it was a charm; and she saw that the poor bride would be in her power, now that she had lost the hair.

So when the bride had done drinking, and would have got upon Falada again, the maid said, 'I shall ride upon Falada, and you may have my horse instead;' so she was forced to give up her horse, and soon afterwards to take off her royal clothes and put on her maid's shabby ones.

At last, as they drew near the end of their journey, this treacherous servant threatened to kill her mistress if she ever told anyone what had happened. But Falada saw it all, and marked it well.

Then the waiting-maid rode on upon Falada, and the real bride rode upon the other horse, and they went on in this way till at last they came to the royal court. There was great joy at their coming, and the prince flew to meet them, and lifted the maid from her horse, thinking she was the one who was to be his wife; and she was led upstairs to the royal chamber; but the true princess was told to stay in the court below.

Now the old king happened just then to have nothing else to do; so he amused himself by sitting at his kitchen window, looking at what was going on; and he saw her in the courtyard. As she looked very pretty, and too delicate for a waiting-maid, he went up into the royal chamber to ask the bride who it was she had brought with her but had thus left standing in the court below.

'I brought her with me for the sake of her company on the road,' said she; 'pray give the girl some work to do, that she may not be idle.'

The old king could not for some time think of any work for her to do; but at last he said, 'I have a lad who takes care of my geese; she may go and help him.' Now the name of this lad that the real bride was to help in watching the king's geese was Curdken.

But the false bride said to the prince, 'Dear husband, pray do me one piece of kindness.'

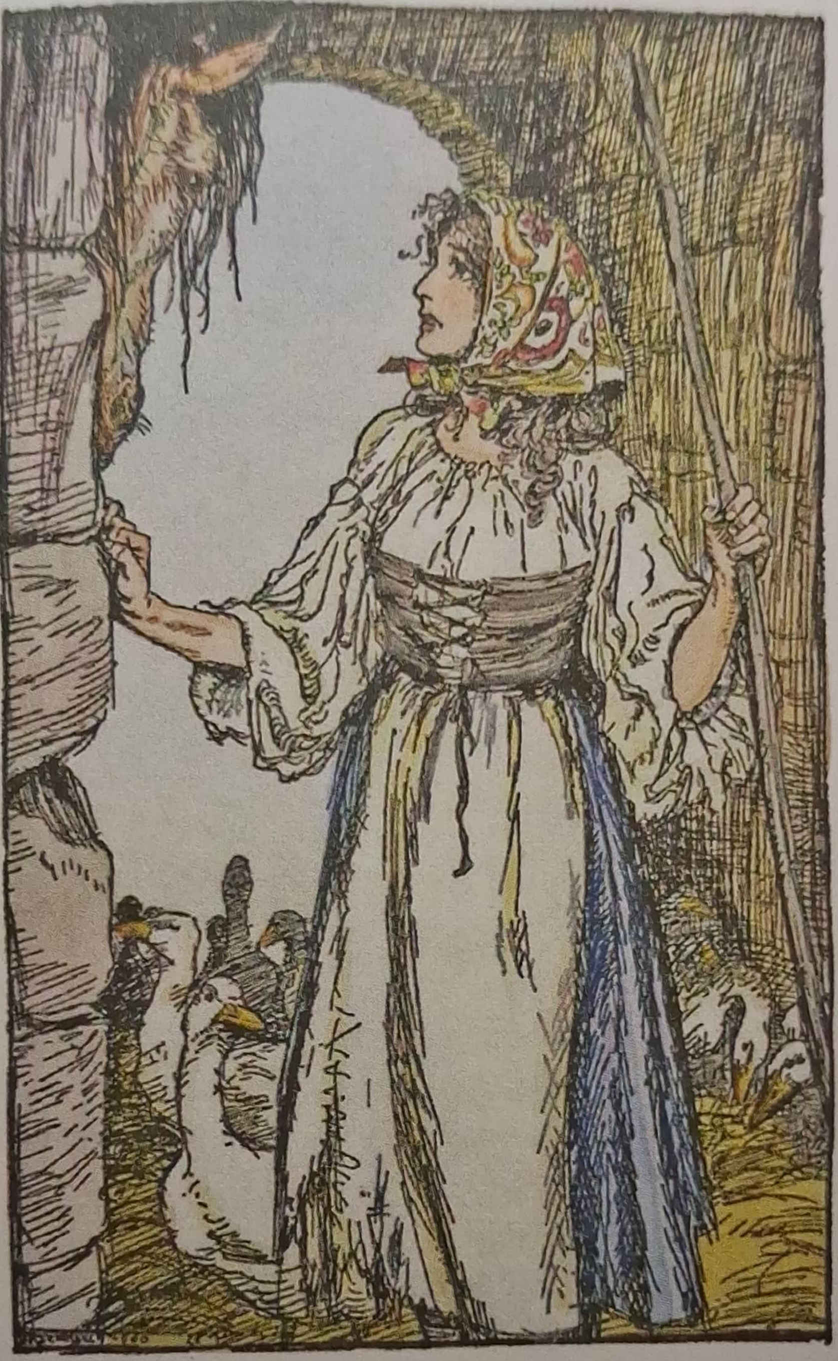
'That I will,' said the prince.

'Then tell one of your slaughterers to cut off the head of the horse I rode upon, for it was very unruly, and plagued me sadly on the road.' But the truth was, she was very much afraid lest Falada should someday or other speak, and tell all she had done to the princess. She had her way, and the faithful Falada was killed; but when the true princess heard of it, she wept, and begged the man to nail up Falada's head in a large dark gateway of the city, through which she had to pass every morning and evening, that there she might still see him sometimes. Then the slaughterer said he would do as she wished; and cut off the head, and nailed it up in the dark gateway.

Early the next morning, as she and Curdken went out through the gate, she said sorrowfully: 'Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!' and the head answered:

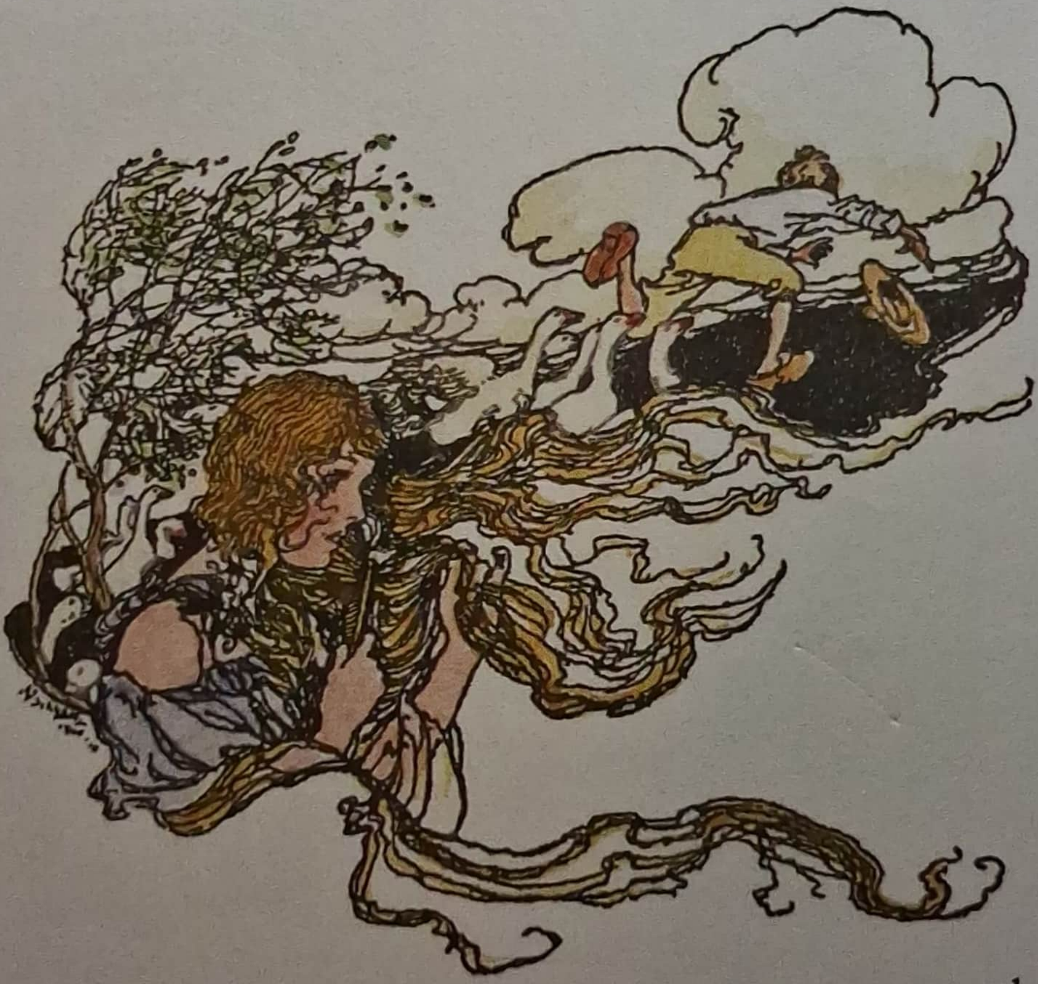
> 'Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
> Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
> Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

Then they went out of the city, and drove the geese on. And when she came to the meadow, she sat down upon a bank there, and let down her waving locks of hair, which were all of pure silver; and when Curdken saw it glitter in the sun, he ran up, and would have pulled some of the locks out, but she cried:



'Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!

Then there came a wind so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat; and away it flew over the hills: and he was forced to turn and run after it. By the time he came back, she had done combing and curling her hair, and had put it up again safe. Then he was very angry and sulky, and would not speak to her at all; but they watched the geese until it grew dark in the evening, and then drove them homewards.



The next morning, as they were going through the dark gateway, the poor girl looked up at Falada's head, and cried: 'Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!' and the head answered:

> 'Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
> Alas! alas! if they mother knew it,
> Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

Then she drove on the geese, and sat down again in the meadow, and began to comb out her hair as before; and Curdken ran up to her, and wanted to take hold of it; but she cried out quickly:

'Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!

Then the wind came and blew away his hat; and off it flew a great way, over the hills and far away, so that he had to run after it; and when he came back she had bound up her hair again, and all was safe. So they watched the geese till it grew dark.

In the evening, after they came home, Curdken went to the old king, and said, 'I cannot have that strange girl to help me to keep the geese any longer.'

'Why?' said the king.

'Because, instead of doing any good, she does nothing but tease me all day long.'

Then the king made him tell him what had happened. And Curdken said, 'When we go in the morning through the dark gateway with our flock of geese, she cries and talks with the head of a horse that hangs upon the wall, and says: 'Falada, Falada, there thou hangest!' and the head answers:

'Bride, bride, there thou gangest!
Alas! alas! if they mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly, would she rue it.'

And Curdken went on to tell the king what had happened upon the meadow where the geese fed: how his hat was blown away, and how he was forced to run after it, and to leave his flock of geese to themselves.

The old king told the boy to go out again the next day, and when morning came, he placed himself beside the dark gateway, and heard how she spoke to Falada, and how Falada answered. Then he went into the field, and hid himself in a bush by the meadow's side; and he soon saw with his own eyes how they drove the flock of geese; and how, after a little time, she let down her hair that glittered in the sun. And then he heard her say:

'Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow, breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd
Till the silvery locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!

And soon came a gale of wind, and carried away Curdken's hat, and away went Curdken after it, while the girl went on combing and curling her hair. All this the old king saw, and then he went home without being seen. When the little goose girl came back in the evening he called her aside, and asked her why she behaved as she did; she burst into tears, and said, 'That I must not tell you or any man, or I shall lose my life.'

But the old king begged so hard that she had no peace till she had told him all the tale, from beginning to end, word for word. And it was very lucky for her that she did so, for when she had done the king ordered royal clothes to be put upon her, and gazed on her with wonder, she was so beautiful. Then he called his son and told him that he had only a false bride, one who was merely a waiting-maid, while the true bride stood by. And the young king rejoiced when he saw her beauty, and heard how meek and patient she had been; and without saying anything to the false bride, the king ordered a great feast to be got ready for all his court. The bridegroom sat at the top, with the false princess on one side, and the true one on the other; but nobody recognised her, for her beauty was quite dazzling to their eyes; and she did not seem at all like the little goose girl, now that she had her brilliant dress on.

When they had eaten and drunk, and were very merry, the old king said he would tell them a tale. So he began, and told all the story of the princess, as if it was one that he had once heard; and he asked the true waiting-maid what she thought ought to be done to anyone who would behave thus.

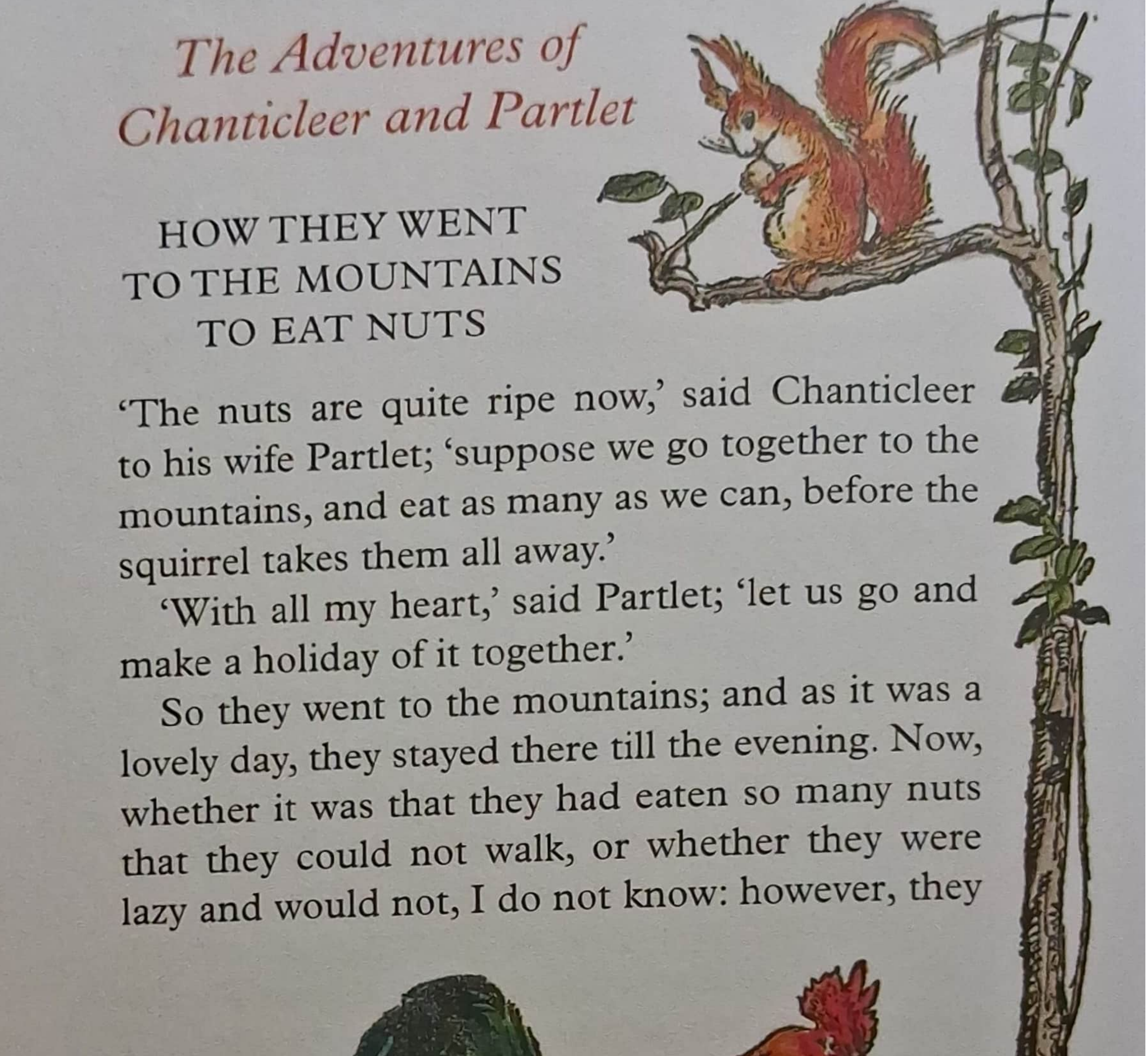
'Nothing better,' said this false bride, 'than that she should be thrown into a cask stuck round with sharp nails, and that two white horses should be put to it, and should drag it from street to street till she was dead.'

'Thou art she!' said the old king; 'and as thou hast judged thyself, so shall it be done to thee.'

And the young king was then married to his true wife, and they reigned over the kingdom in peace and happiness all their lives; and the good fairy came to see them, and restored the faithful Falada to life again.

The Adventures of Chanticleer and Partlet

HOW THEY WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS TO EAT NUTS



'The nuts are quite ripe now,' said Chanticleer to his wife Partlet; 'suppose we go together to the mountains, and eat as many as we can, before the squirrel takes them all away.'

'With all my heart,' said Partlet; 'let us go and make a holiday of it together.'

So they went to the mountains; and as it was a lovely day, they stayed there till the evening. Now, whether it was that they had eaten so many nuts that they could not walk, or whether they were lazy and would not, I do not know: however, they took it into their heads that it did not become them to go home on foot. So Chanticleer began to build a little carriage of nutshells, and when it was finished, Partlet jumped into it and sat down, and bid Chanticleer harness himself to it and draw her home. 'That's a good joke!' said Chanticleer; 'no, that will never do; I had rather walk home than do that; I'll sit on the box and be coachman, if you like, but I'll not draw.' While this was passing, a duck came quacking up and cried out, 'You thieving vagabonds, what business have you in my grounds? I'll pay you for your insolence!' and upon that she fell upon Chanticleer most lustily. But Chanticleer was no coward, and returned the duck's blows with his sharp spurs so fiercely that she soon began to cry out for mercy; which was only granted her upon condition that she would draw the carriage home for them. This she agreed to do; and Chanticleer got up on the box, and drove, crying, 'Now, duck, get on as fast as you can.' And away they went at a pretty good pace.

After they had travelled along a little way, they met a needle and a pin walking together along the road; and the needle cried out, 'Stop, stop!' and said it was so dark that they could hardly find their way, and so muddy underfoot that they could not get on at all; he told them that he and his friend, the pin, had been at a public-house a few miles off, and had sat drinking till they had forgotten how late it was; he begged therefore that the travellers would be so kind as to give them a lift in their carriage. Chanticleer observing that they were but thin fellows, and not likely to take up much room, told them they might ride, but made them promise not to dirty the wheels of the carriage in getting in, nor to tread on Partlet's toes.

Late at night they arrived at an inn; and as it was bad travelling in the dark, and the duck seemed rather tired, and waddled about a good deal from one side to the other, they made up their minds to fix their quarters there; but the landlord at first was unwilling, and said his house was full, thinking they might not be very respectable company; however, they spoke civilly to him, and gave him the egg which Partlet had laid by the way, and said they would give him the duck, who was in the habit of laying one every day: so at last he let them come in, and they ordered a handsome supper, and spent the evening very jollily.

Early in the morning, before it was quite light, and when nobody was stirring in the inn, Chanticleer awakened his wife, and, fetching the egg, they pecked a hole in it, ate it up, and threw the shell into the fireplace; they then went to the pin and needle, who were fast asleep, and seizing them by the heads, stuck one into the landlord's easy chair and the other into his handkerchief; and, having done this, they crept away as softly as possible. However, the duck, who slept in the open air in the yard, heard them coming, and jumping into the brook which ran close by the inn, soon swam out of their reach.

An hour or two afterwards the landlord got up, and took his handkerchief to wipe his face, but the pin ran into him and pricked him; then he walked into the kitchen to light his pipe at the fire, but when he stirred it up the eggshell fragments flew into his eyes, and almost blinded him. 'Bless me!' said he, 'all the world seems to have designs against my head this morning;' and so saying, he threw himself sulkily into his easy chair; but, oh dear! the needle ran into him; and this time the pain was not in his head. He now flew into a very great passion, and, suspecting the company who had come in the night before, he went to look for them, but they were nowhere to be found; so he swore that he never again would take in such a troop of vagabonds, who ate a great deal, paid no reckoning, and gave him nothing for his trouble but their apish tricks.

HOW CHANTICLEER AND PARTLET WENT TO VISIT MR KORBES

Another day, Chanticleer and Partlet wished to ride out together; so Chanticleer built a handsome carriage with four red wheels, and harnessed six mice to it; and then he and Partlet got into the carriage, and away they drove.

Soon afterwards a cat met them, and said, 'Where are you going?'

And Chanticleer replied,

'All on our way
A visit to pay
To Mr Korbes, the fox, today.'

Then the cat said, 'Take me with you.'

Chanticleer said, 'With all my heart; get up behind, and be sure you do not fall off.

Take care of this handsome coach of mine,
Nor dirty my pretty red wheels so fine!
Now, mice, be ready,
And, wheels, run steady!
For we are going a visit to pay
To Mr Korbes, the fox, today.'

Soon after up came a millstone, an egg, a duck and a pin; and Chanticleer gave them all leave to get into the carriage and go with them.

When they arrived at Mr Korbes's house, he was not at home; so the mice drew the carriage into the coach-house, Chanticleer and Partlet flew up on to a beam, the cat sat down in the fireplace, the duck got into the washing cistern, the pin stuck himself into the bed pillow, the millstone laid himself over the house-door and the egg rolled himself up in the towel.

When Mr Korbes came home, he went to the fireplace to make a fire, but the cat threw all the ashes in his eyes; so he ran to the kitchen to wash himself, but there the duck splashed all the water in his face; and when he tried to wipe himself, the egg broke to pieces in the towel all over his face and eyes. Then he was very angry, and went without his supper to bed; but when he laid his head on the pillow, the pin ran into his cheek; at this he became quite furious, and, jumping up, would have run out of the house, but when he came to the door, the millstone fell down on his head and killed him on the spot.

HOW PARTLET DIED, AND WAS BURIED, AND HOW CHANTICLEER DIED OF GRIEF

Another day, Chanticleer and Partlet agreed to go again to the mountains to eat nuts; and it was settled that all the nuts which they found should be shared equally between them. Now Partlet found a very large nut, but she said nothing about it to Chanticleer, and kept it all to herself; however, it was so big that she could not swallow it, and it stuck in her throat. Then she was in a great fright, and cried out to Chanticleer, 'Pray run as fast as you can, and fetch me some water, or I shall be choked.'

Chanticleer ran as fast as he could to the river, and said, 'River, give me some water, for Partlet lies in the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut.'

The river said, 'Run first to the bride, and ask her for a silken cord to draw up the water.'

Chanticleer ran to the bride, and said, 'Bride, you must give me a silken cord, for then the river will give me water, and the water I will carry to Partlet, who lies on the mountain, and will be choked by a great nut.'

But the bride said, 'Run first and bring me my garland that is hanging on a willow in the garden.'

Then Chanticleer ran to the garden, and took the garland from the bough where it hung, and brought it to the bride; and then the bride gave him the silken cord, and he took the silken cord to the river; and the river gave him water, and he carried the water to Partlet; but in the meantime she had been choked by the great nut, and lay quite dead, and never moved again.

Then Chanticleer was very sorry, and cried bitterly; and all the beasts came and wept with him over poor Partlet. And six mice built a little hearse to carry her to her grave; and when it was ready they harnessed themselves before it, and Chanticleer drove them.

On the way they met the fox. 'Where are you going, Chanticleer?' said he.

'To bury my Partlet,' said the other.

'May I go with you?' said the fox.

'Yes; but you must get up behind, or my horses will not be able to draw you.'

Then the fox got up behind; and presently the wolf, the bear, the goat and all the beasts of the wood came and climbed upon the hearse.

So on they went till they came to a rapid stream. 'How shall we get over?' said Chanticleer.

Then said a straw, 'I will lay myself across, and you may pass over upon me.'

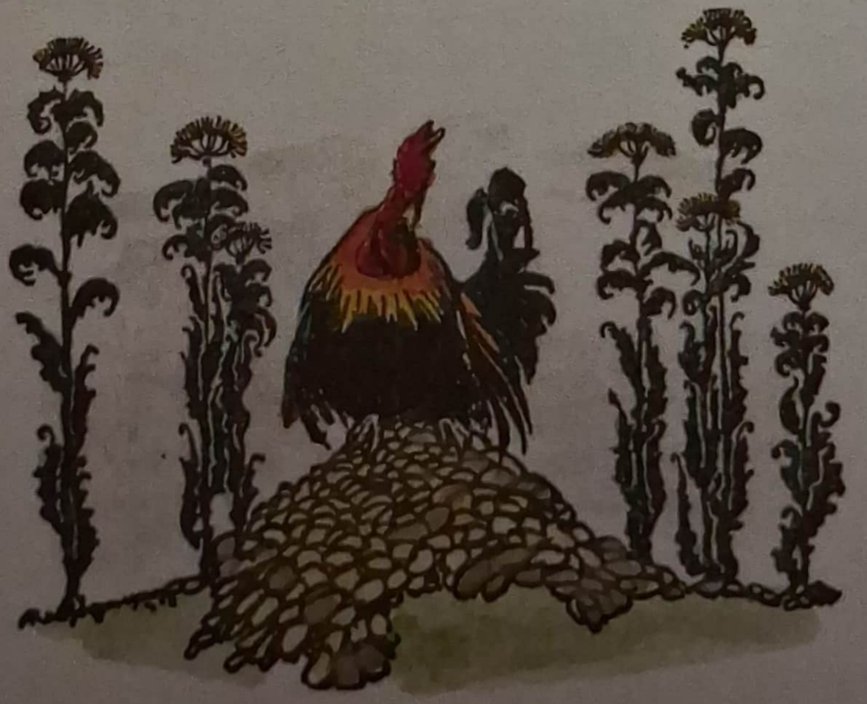
But as the mice were going over, the straw slipped away and fell into the water, and the six mice all fell in and were drowned.

What was to be done?

Then a large log of wood came and said, 'I am big enough; I will lay myself across the stream, and you shall pass over upon me.'

So he laid himself down; but they managed so clumsily that the log of wood fell in and was carried away by the stream.

Then a stone, who saw what had happened, came up and kindly offered to help poor Chanticleer by laying himself across the stream; and this time he got safely to the other side with the hearse, and managed to get Partlet out of it; but the fox and the other mourners, who were sitting behind, were too heavy,



and fell back into the water and were all carried away by the stream and drowned.

Thus Chanticleer was left alone with his dead Partlet; and having dug a grave for her, he laid her in it, and made a little hillock over her. Then he sat down by the grave, and wept and mourned, till at last he died too; and so all were dead.

Rapunzel

There were once a man and a woman who had long in vain wished for a child. At length it seemed that God was about to grant their desire.

These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen, which was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go into it because it belonged to an enchantress who had great power and was dreaded by all the world. One day the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful rampion (sometimes called rapunzium), and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it; she quite pined away, and began to look pale and miserable.

Then her husband was alarmed, and asked: 'What ails you, dear wife?'

'Ah,' she replied, 'if I can't eat some of the rampion which is in the garden behind our house, I shall die.'

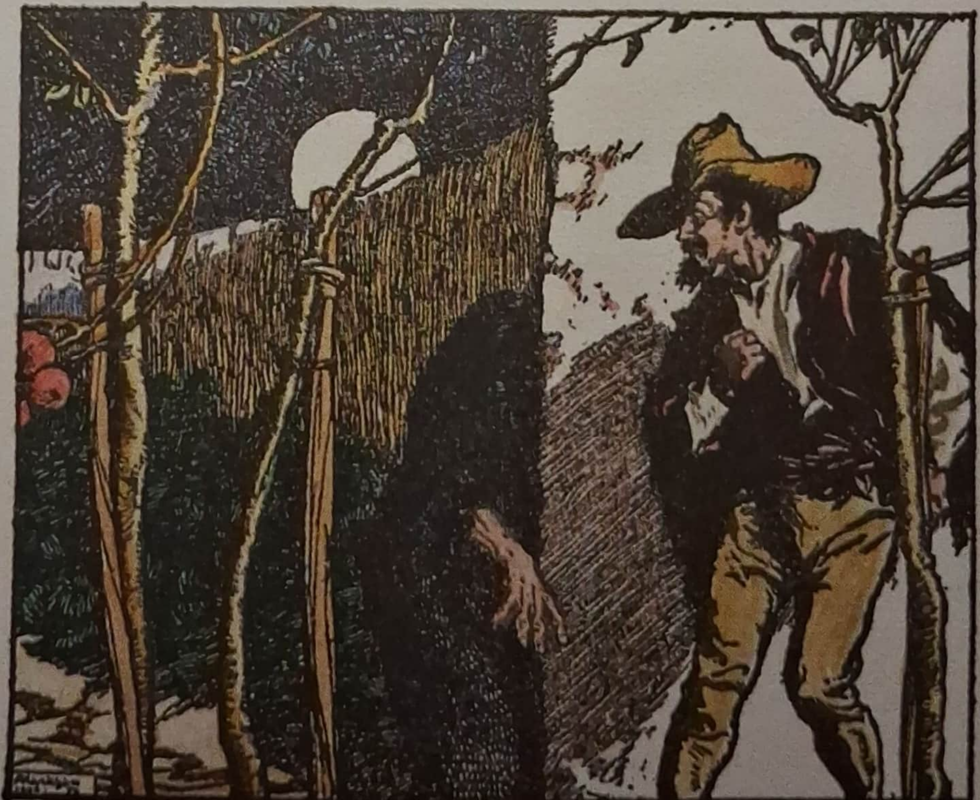
The man, who loved her, thought: 'Sooner than let your wife die, bring her some of the rampion yourself, let it cost what it will.'

At twilight, he clambered down over the wall into the garden of the enchantress, hastily clutched a handful of rampion and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it greedily. It tasted so good to her – so very good – that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the gloom of evening therefore, he let himself down again; but when he had clambered down the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the enchantress standing before him.

'How can you dare,' said she, fixing him with an angry look, 'descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? You shall suffer for it!'

'Ah,' answered he, 'let mercy take the place of justice. I only made up my mind to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died if she had not got some to eat.'

Then the enchantress allowed her anger to be softened, and said to him: 'If the case be as you say, I will allow you to take away with you as much rampion as you will, only I make one condition: you must give me the child which your wife will bring into the world; it shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother.'



The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman was brought to bed, the enchantress appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child under the sun. When she was twelve years old, the enchantress shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest. It had neither stairs nor door, but quite at the top was a little window. When the enchantress wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath it and cried: 'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair to me.'

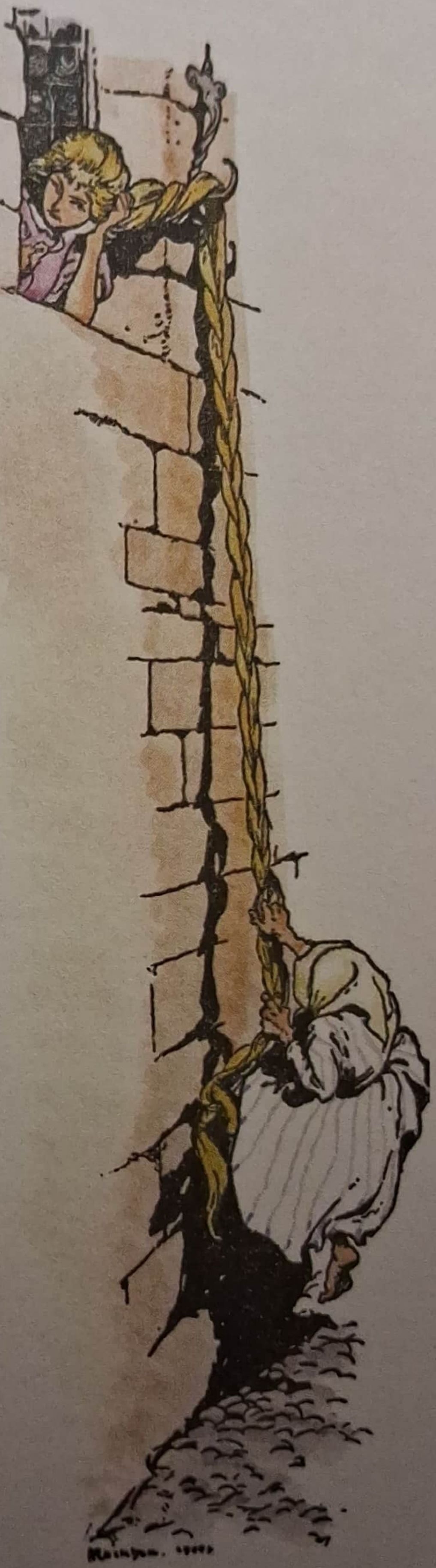
Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the enchantress she unfastened her braided tresses, wound them round one of the hooks of the window above, and let the hair fall twenty metres down, whereupon the enchantress climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the king's son rode through the forest and passed by the tower. Coming from it he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her solitude passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound. The king's son wanted to climb up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it. Once, when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that an enchantress came there, and he heard how she cried: 'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair to me.' Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the enchantress climbed up to her.

'If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I too will try my fortune,' said he, and the next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried: ‘Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair to me.’ Immediately the hair fell down and the king’s son climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man, such as her eyes had never yet beheld, came to her; but the king’s son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stirred that it had let him have no rest, and he had been determined to see her.

Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she did not hesitate; she thought: ‘He will love me more than old Dame Gothel does;’ and she said yes, and laid her hand



in his. She said: 'I will willingly go away with you, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with you a skein of silk every time that you come, and I will weave a ladder with it, and when that is ready I will descend, and you will take me away on your horse.' They agreed that until that time he should come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day.

The enchantress remarked nothing of this, until one day Rapunzel thoughtlessly said to her: 'Tell me, Dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much heavier for me to draw up than the king's young son – he is with me in a moment.'

'Ah! you wicked child,' cried the enchantress. 'What do I hear you say! I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have deceived me!'

In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and snip, snap, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay on the ground. And she was so pitiless that she banished poor Rapunzel to a desert where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day that she cast out Rapunzel, however, the enchantress fastened the braids of hair which she had cut off to the hook of the window, and when the king's son came and cried: 'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair to me,' she let the hair down.

The king's son ascended, but instead of finding his dearest Rapunzel, he found the enchantress, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous looks.

'Aha!' she cried mockingly, 'you would fetch your dearest, but the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest; the cat has got it, and will scratch out your eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to you; you will never see her again.'

The king's son was beside himself with pain, and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did naught but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife. Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel, with the twins to which she had given birth, a boy and a girl, lived in wretchedness.

He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it, and when he approached, Rapunzel knew him and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before. He led her to his kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time afterwards, happy and contented.

Fundevogel

There was once a forester who went into the forest to hunt, and as he entered it he heard the sound of screaming as if a little child were there. He followed the sound, and at last came to a high tree, and at the top of this a little child was sitting, for the mother had fallen asleep under the tree with the child, and a bird of prey had seen it in her arms, had flown down, snatched it away and set it on the high tree.

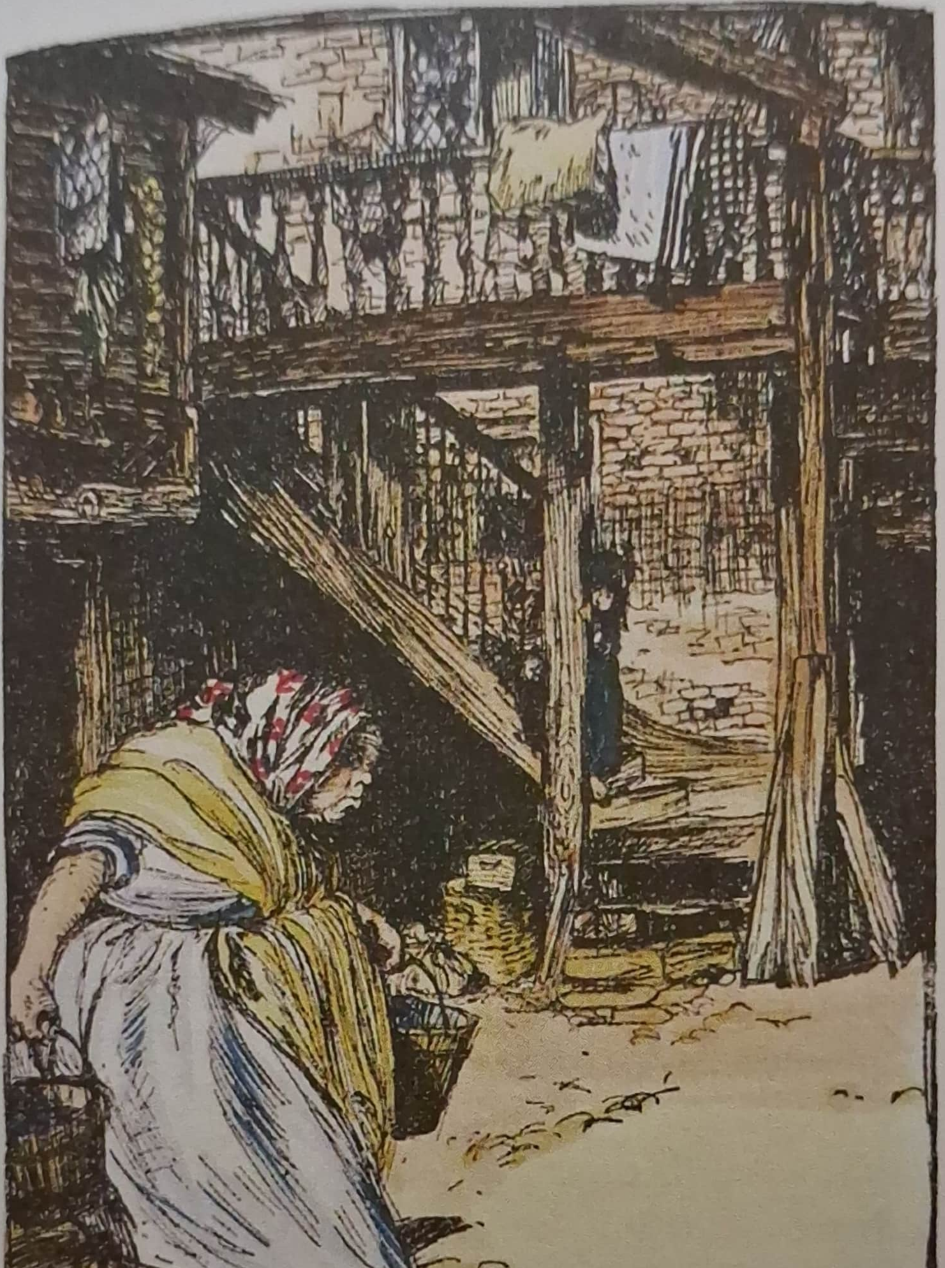
The forester climbed up, brought the child down, and thought to himself: 'You will take him home with you, and bring him up with your Lina.' He took it home, therefore, and the two children grew up together. And the one which he had found on the tree was called Fundevogel, because a bird had carried him away. Fundevogel and Lina loved each other so dearly that when they did not see each other they were sad.

Now the forester had an old cook, who one evening took two pails and began to fetch water, and did not go once only, but many times, out to the spring.

Lina saw this and said, 'Listen, old Sanna, why are you fetching so much water?'

'If you will never repeat it to anyone, I will tell you why.' So Lina said she would never repeat it to anyone, and then the cook said: 'Early tomorrow morning, when the forester is out hunting, I will heat the water, and when it is boiling in the copper, I will throw in Fundevogel, and will boil him in it.'

Early next morning the forester got up and went out hunting, and when he was gone the children were still in bed.



Then Lina said to Fundevogel: 'If you will never leave me, I too will never leave you.'

Fundevogel said: 'Neither now nor ever will I leave you.'

Then said Lina: 'Then will I tell you. Last night, old Sanna carried so many buckets of water into the house that I asked her why she was doing it, and she said that I must promise not to tell anyone, but her plan is early this morning, when father is out hunting, to set the copper full of water, throw you into it and boil you; but we will get up quickly, dress ourselves, and go away together.'

The two children therefore got up, dressed themselves quickly, and went away. When the water in the copper was boiling, the cook went into the bedroom to fetch Fundevogel and throw him into it. But when she came in, and went to the beds, both the children were gone. Then she was terribly alarmed, and she said to herself: 'What shall I say now when the forester comes home and sees that the children are gone? They must be followed instantly to get them back again.'

Then the cook sent three servants after them, who were to run and overtake the children. The children, however, were sitting outside the forest, and when they saw from afar the three servants running, Lina said to Fundevogel: 'Never leave me, and I will never leave you.'

Fundevogel said: 'Neither now, nor ever.'

Then said Lina: 'Do you become a rose tree, and I the rose upon it.'

When the three servants came to the forest, nothing was there but a rose tree and one rose on it, but the children were nowhere. Then said they: 'There is nothing to be done here,' and they went home and told the cook that they had seen nothing in the forest but a little rose bush with one rose on it.

Then the old cook scolded and said: 'You simpletons, you should have cut the rose bush in two and broken off the rose and brought it home with you; go and do it at once.' They had therefore to go out and look for the second time.

The children, however, saw them coming from a distance. Then Lina said: 'Fundevogel, never leave me, and I will never leave you.'

Fundevogel said: 'Neither now, nor ever.'

Said Lina: 'Then do you become a church, and I'll be the chandelier in it.'

So when the three servants came, nothing was there but a church, with a chandelier in it. They said therefore to each other: 'What can we do here, let us go home.'

When they got home, the cook asked if they had not found them; so they said no, they had found nothing but a church, and there was a chandelier in it. And the cook scolded them and said: 'You fools! why did you not pull the church to pieces, and bring the chandelier home with you?'

And now the old cook herself got on her legs, and went with the three servants in pursuit of the children.

The children, however, saw from afar that the three servants were coming, and the cook waddling after them.

Then said Lina: 'Fundevogel, never leave me, and I will never leave you.'

Then said Fundevogel: 'Neither now, nor ever.'

Said Lina: 'Be a fishpond, and I will be the duck upon it.'

The cook, however, came up to them, and when she saw the pond she lay down by it, and was about to drink it up. But the duck swam quickly to her, seized her head in its beak and drew her into the water, and there the old witch could not help but drown.

Then the children went home together, and were heartily delighted; and if they have not died, they are living still.

The Valiant Little Tailor

One summer's morning a little tailor was sitting on his table by the window; he was in good spirits, and sewed with all his might.

Then came a peasant woman down the street crying: 'Good jams, cheap! Good jams, cheap!'

This rang pleasantly in the tailor's ears; he stretched his delicate head out of the window, and called: 'Come up here, dear woman; here you will get rid of your goods.'

The woman came up the three steps to the tailor with her heavy basket, and he made her unpack all the pots for him.

He inspected each one, lifted it up, put his nose to it, and at length said: 'The jam seems to me to be good, so weigh me out four ounces, dear woman, and if it is a quarter of a pound that is of no consequence.'

The woman who had hoped to find a good sale, gave him what he desired, but went away quite angry and grumbling.

'Now, this jam shall be blessed by God,' cried the little tailor, 'and give me health and strength;' so he brought the bread out of the cupboard, cut himself a piece right across the loaf and spread the jam over it. 'This won't taste bitter,' said he, 'but I will just finish the jacket before I take a bite.'

He laid the bread near him and sewed on, in his joy making bigger and bigger stitches. In the meantime the smell of the sweet jam rose to where the flies were sitting in great numbers, and they were attracted and descended on it in hosts.

'Hi! Who invited you?' said the little tailor, and drove the unbidden guests away.

The flies, however, who understood not a word, would not be turned away, but came back again in ever-increasing companies. The little tailor at last lost all patience, and drew a piece of cloth from the hole under his work-table, and, saying: 'Wait, and I will give it to you,' struck it mercilessly on them.

When he drew it away and counted, there lay before him no fewer than seven, dead and with legs stretched out.

'Are you a fellow of that sort?' said he, and could not help admiring his own bravery. 'The whole town shall know of this!' And the little tailor hastened to cut himself a girdle, stitched it, and embroidered on it in large letters: 'Seven at one stroke'.

'Why stop at the town?' he continued. 'The whole world shall hear of it!' and his heart wagged with joy like a lamb's tail.

The tailor put on the girdle, and resolved to go forth into the world, because he thought his workshop was too small for his valour. Before he went away, he sought about in the house to see if there was anything which he could take with him; however, he found nothing but an old cheese, and that he put in his pocket. In front of the door he observed a bird which had caught itself in the thicket. It had to go into his pocket with the cheese. Now he took to the road boldly, and as he was light and nimble, he felt no fatigue. The road led him up a mountain, and when he had reached the highest point of it, there sat a powerful giant looking peacefully about him.

The little tailor went bravely up, spoke to him, and said: 'Good-day, comrade, so you are sitting there overlooking the widespread world! I am just on my way thither, and want to try my luck. Have you any inclination to go with me?'

The giant looked contemptuously at the tailor, and said: 'You ragamuffin! You miserable creature!'

'Oh, indeed?' answered the little tailor and, unbuttoning his coat, showed the giant the girdle. 'There may you read what kind of a man I am!'

The giant read: 'Seven at one stroke', and thought that they had been men whom the tailor had killed, and began to feel a little respect for the tiny fellow. Nevertheless, he wished to try him first, and took a stone in his hand and squeezed it together so that water dropped out of it. 'Do that likewise,' said the giant, 'if you have strength.'

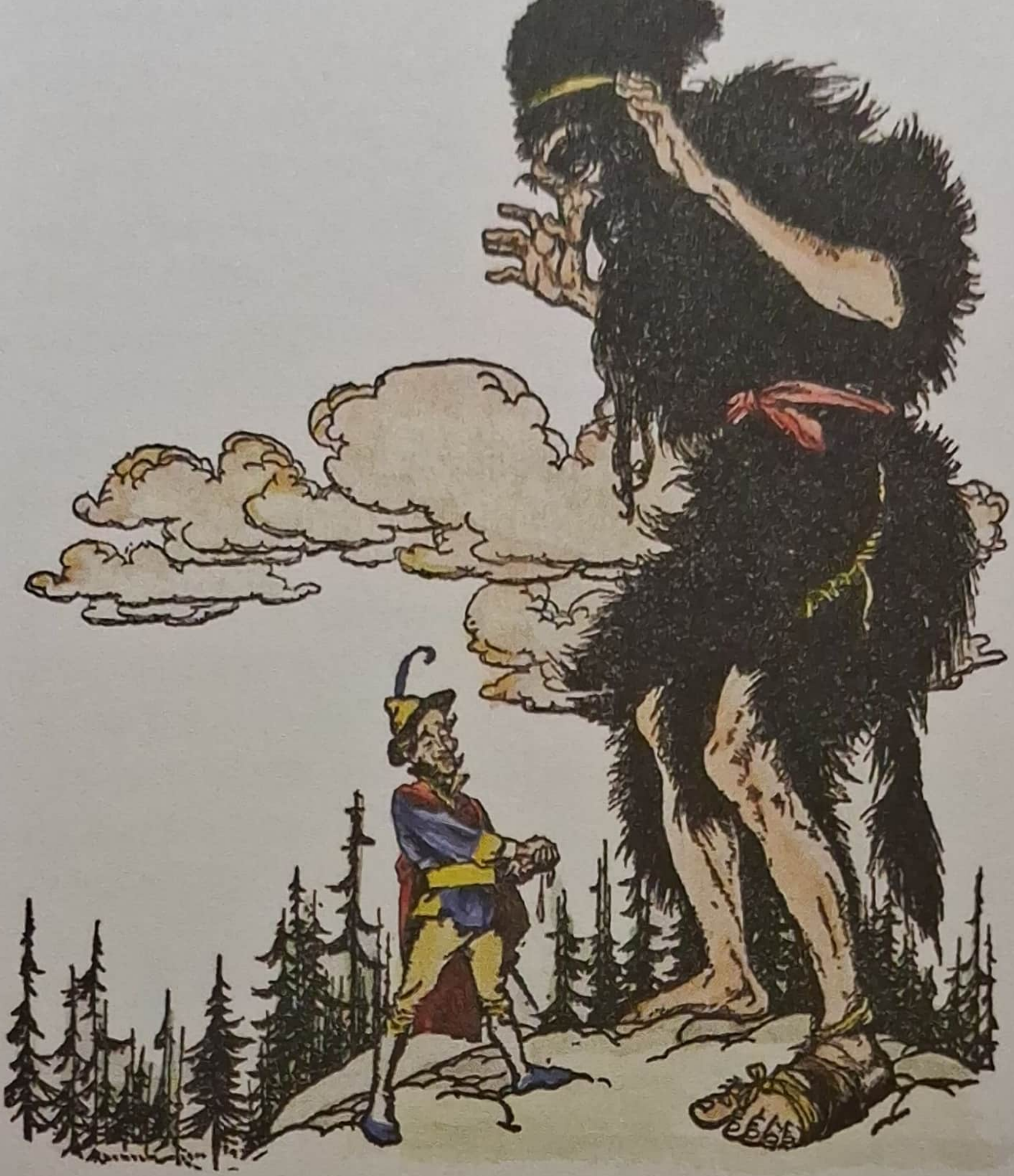
'Is that all?' said the tailor; 'that is child's play with us!' and put his hand into his pocket, brought out the soft cheese, and pressed it until the liquid ran out of it. 'Faith,' said he, 'that was a little better, wasn't it?'

The giant did not know what to say, and could not believe it of the little man. Then the giant picked up a stone and threw it so high that the eye could scarcely follow it. 'Now, little mite of a man, do that likewise.'

'Well thrown,' said the tailor; 'but after all the stone came down to earth again; I will throw you one which shall never come back at all,' and he put his hand into his pocket, took out the bird, and threw it into the air. The bird, delighted with its liberty, rose, flew away and did not come back. 'How does that shot please you, comrade?' asked the tailor.

'You can certainly throw,' said the giant; 'but now we will see if you are able to carry anything properly.'

He took the little tailor to a mighty oak tree which lay there felled on the ground, and said: 'If you are



strong enough, help me to carry the tree out of the forest.'

'Readily,' answered the little man; 'take you the trunk on your shoulders, and I will raise up the branches and twigs; after all, they are the heaviest.' The giant took the trunk on his shoulder, but the tailor seated himself on a branch, and the giant, who could not look round, had to carry away the whole tree, and the little tailor into the bargain; he, behind, was quite merry and happy, and whistled the song

'Three tailors rode forth from the gate', as if carrying the tree were child's play.

The giant, after he had dragged the heavy burden part of the way, could go no farther, and cried: 'Hark you, I shall have to let the tree fall!'

The tailor sprang nimbly down, seized the tree with both arms as if he had been carrying it, and said to the giant: 'You are such a great fellow, and yet cannot even carry the tree!'

They went on together, and as they passed a cherry tree, the giant laid hold of the top of the tree where the ripest fruit was hanging, bent it down, gave it into the tailor's hand, and bade him eat. But the little tailor was much too weak to hold the tree, and when the giant let it go, it sprang back again, and the tailor was tossed into the air with it.

When he had fallen down again without injury, the giant said: 'What is this? Have you not strength enough to hold a weak twig?'

'There is no lack of strength,' answered the little tailor. 'Do you think that could be anything to a man who has struck down seven at one blow? I leapt over the tree because the huntsmen are shooting down there in the thicket. Jump, as I did, if you can do it.'

The giant made the attempt but he could not get over the tree, and remained hanging in the branches, so that in this also the tailor kept the upper hand.

The giant said: 'If you are such a valiant fellow, come with me into our cavern and spend the night with us.'

The little tailor was willing, and followed him. When they went into the cave, other giants were sitting there by the fire, and each of them had a roasted sheep in his hand and was eating it. The little tailor looked round and thought: 'It is much more spacious here than in my workshop.' The giant showed him a bed, and said he was to lie down in it and sleep. The bed, however, was too big for the little tailor; he did not lie down in it, but crept into a corner.

When it was midnight, and the giant thought that the little tailor was lying in a sound sleep, he got up, took a great iron bar, cut through the bed with one blow, and thought he had finished off the grasshopper for good.

With the earliest dawn the giants went into the forest, and had quite forgotten the little tailor, when all at once he walked up to them quite merrily and boldly. The giants were terrified, they were afraid that he would strike them all dead, and ran away in a great hurry.

The little tailor went onwards, always following his own pointed nose. After he had walked for a long time, he came to the courtyard of a royal palace, and as he felt weary, he lay down on the grass and fell asleep.

While he lay there, the people came and inspected him on all sides, and read on his girdle: 'Seven at one stroke'.

'Ah!' said they, 'what does the great warrior want here in the midst of peace? He must be a mighty lord.' They went and announced him to the king, and gave it as their opinion that if war should break out, this would be a weighty and useful man who ought on no account to be allowed to depart. The counsel pleased the king, and he sent one of his courtiers to the little tailor to offer him military service when he awoke. The ambassador remained standing by the sleeper, waited until he stretched his limbs and opened his eyes, and then conveyed to him this proposal.

'For this very reason have I come here,' the tailor replied. 'I am ready to enter the king's service.'

He was therefore honourably received, and a special dwelling was assigned him.

The soldiers, however, were set against the little tailor, and wished him a thousand miles away. 'What is to be the end of this?' they said among themselves. 'If we quarrel with him, and he strikes about him, seven of us will fall at every blow; not one of us can stand against him.'

They came therefore to a decision, betook themselves in a body to the king, and begged for their dismissal. 'We are not prepared,' said they, 'to stay with a man who kills seven at one stroke.'

The king was sorry that for the sake of one he should lose all his faithful servants, wished that he had never set eyes on the tailor, and would willingly have been rid of him again. But he did not venture to give him his dismissal, for he dreaded lest he should strike him and all his people dead and place himself on the royal throne. He thought about it for a long time, and at last found good counsel. He sent to the little tailor and caused him to be informed that, as he was a great warrior, he had one request to make to him.

In a forest of his country lived two giants, who caused great mischief with their robbing, murdering, ravaging and burning, and no one could approach them without putting himself in danger of death. If the tailor conquered and killed these two giants, he would give him his only daughter to wife, and half of his kingdom as a dowry, likewise one hundred horsemen should go with him to assist him. 'That would indeed be a fine thing for a man like me!' thought the little tailor. 'One is not offered a beautiful princess and half a kingdom every day of one's life!'

'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'I will soon subdue the giants, and do not require the help of the hundred horsemen to do it; he who can hit seven with one blow has no need to be afraid of two.'

The little tailor went forth, and the hundred horsemen followed him. When he came to the outskirts of the forest, he said to his followers: 'Just stay waiting here, I alone will soon finish off the giants.' Then he bounded into the forest and looked about right and left.

After a while he perceived both giants. They lay sleeping under a tree, and snored so that the branches waved up and down. The little tailor, not idle, gathered two pocketfuls of stones, and with these climbed up the tree. When he was halfway up, he slipped down by a branch until he sat just above the sleepers, and then let one stone after another fall on the breast of one of the giants. For a long time the giant felt nothing, but at last he awoke, pushed his comrade, and said: 'Why are you knocking me?'

You must be dreaming,' said the other. 'I am not knocking you.'

They laid themselves down to sleep again, and then the tailor threw a stone down on to the second. 'What is the meaning of this?' cried the other. 'Why are you pelting me?'

'I am not pelting you,' answered the first, growling. They disputed about it for a time, but as they were weary they let the matter rest, and their eyes closed once more.

The little tailor began his game again, picked out the biggest stone, and threw it with all his might on the breast of the first giant.

'That is too bad!' cried he, and springing up like a madman, he pushed his companion against the tree until it shook. The other paid him back in the same coin, and they got into such a rage that they tore up trees and belaboured each other so long that at last they both fell down dead on the ground at the same time.

Then the little tailor leapt down. 'It is a lucky thing,' said he, 'that they did not tear up the tree on which I was sitting, or I should have had to sprint on to another like a squirrel; but we tailors are nimble.'

He drew out his sword and gave each of them a couple of thrusts in the breast, and then went out to the horsemen and said: 'The work is done; I have finished both of them off, but it was hard work! They tore up trees in their sore need, and defended themselves with them, but all that is to no purpose against a man like myself, who can kill seven at one blow.'

'But are you not wounded?' asked the horsemen.

'You need not concern yourself about that,' answered the tailor, 'they have not bent one hair of mine.' The horsemen would not believe him, and rode into the forest; there they found the giants swimming in their blood, and all round about lay the torn-up trees.

The little tailor demanded of the king the promised reward; he, however, repented of his promise, and again bethought himself how he could get rid of the hero. 'Before you receive my daughter, and half of my kingdom,' said he, 'you must perform one more heroic deed. In the forest roams a unicorn which does great harm, and you must catch it first.'

'I fear one unicorn still less than two giants. Seven at one blow is my kind of affair.'

He took a rope and an axe with him, went forth into the forest, and again bade those who were sent with him to wait outside. He had not long to seek. The unicorn soon came towards him, and rushed directly on the tailor, as if it would gore him with its horn without more ado. 'Softly, softly; it can't be done as quickly as that,' said he, and stood still and waited until the animal was quite close, and then sprang nimbly behind the tree.

The unicorn ran against the tree with all its force and stuck its horn so fast in the trunk that it had not strength enough to draw it out again, and thus it was caught. 'Now, I have got the bird,' said the tailor, and came out from behind the tree and put the rope round its neck, and then with his axe he hewed the horn out of the tree, and when all was ready he led the beast away and took it to the king.

The king still would not give him the promised reward, and made a third demand. Before the wedding the tailor was to catch him a wild boar that made great havoc in the forest, and the huntsmen should give him their help.

'Willingly,' said the tailor, 'that is child's play!' He did not take the huntsmen with him into the forest, and they were well pleased that he did not, for the wild boar had several times received them in such a manner that they had no inclination to lie in wait for him.

When the boar perceived the tailor, it ran on him with foaming mouth and whetted tusks, and was about to throw him to the ground, but the hero fled into a chapel which was near and in one bound sprang out again by the window. The boar ran after him, but the tailor ran round outside and shut the door behind it, and then the raging beast, which was much too heavy and awkward to leap out of the window, was caught.

The little tailor called the huntsmen thither that they might see the prisoner with their own eyes. The hero, however, went to the king, who was now, whether he liked it or not, obliged to keep his promise and give him his daughter and half his kingdom. Had he known that it was no warlike hero but a little tailor who was standing before him, it would have grieved him still more than it did. The wedding was held with great magnificence and small joy, and out of a tailor a king was made.

After some time the young queen heard her husband say in his dreams at night: 'Boy, make me the doublet, and patch the pantaloons, or else I will rap the yard-measure over your ears.' Then she discovered in what state of life the young lord had been born, and next morning complained of her wrongs to her father, and begged him to help her to get rid of her husband, who was nothing else but a tailor.

The king comforted her and said: 'Leave your bedroom door open this night, and my servants shall stand outside, and when he has fallen asleep shall go in, bind him, and take him on board a ship which shall carry him into the wide world.' The woman was satisfied with this; but the king's armour-bearer, who had heard all, was friendly with the young lord, and informed him of the whole plot. 'I'll put a screw into that business,' said the little tailor.

At night he went to bed with his wife at the usual time, and when she thought that he had fallen asleep, she got up, opened the door, and then lay down again. The little tailor, who was only pretending to be asleep, began to cry out in a clear voice: 'Boy, make me the doublet and patch me the pantaloons, or I will rap the yard-measure over your ears. I smote seven at one blow. I killed two giants, I brought away one unicorn and caught a wild boar, and am I to fear those who are standing outside the room.' When these men heard the tailor speaking thus, they were overcome by a great dread, and ran as if the wild huntsman were behind them, and none of them would venture anything further against him. So the little tailor was and remained a king to the end of his life.

Hansel and Gretel

Hard by a great forest dwelt a poor woodcutter with his wife and the two children of his former marriage. The boy was called Hansel and the girl Gretel. He earned very little, and once when a great famine fell on the land, he could no longer procure even daily bread. Now, when he thought over this by night in his bed, and tossed about in his anxiety, he groaned and said to his wife: 'What is to become of us? How are we to feed our poor children when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?'

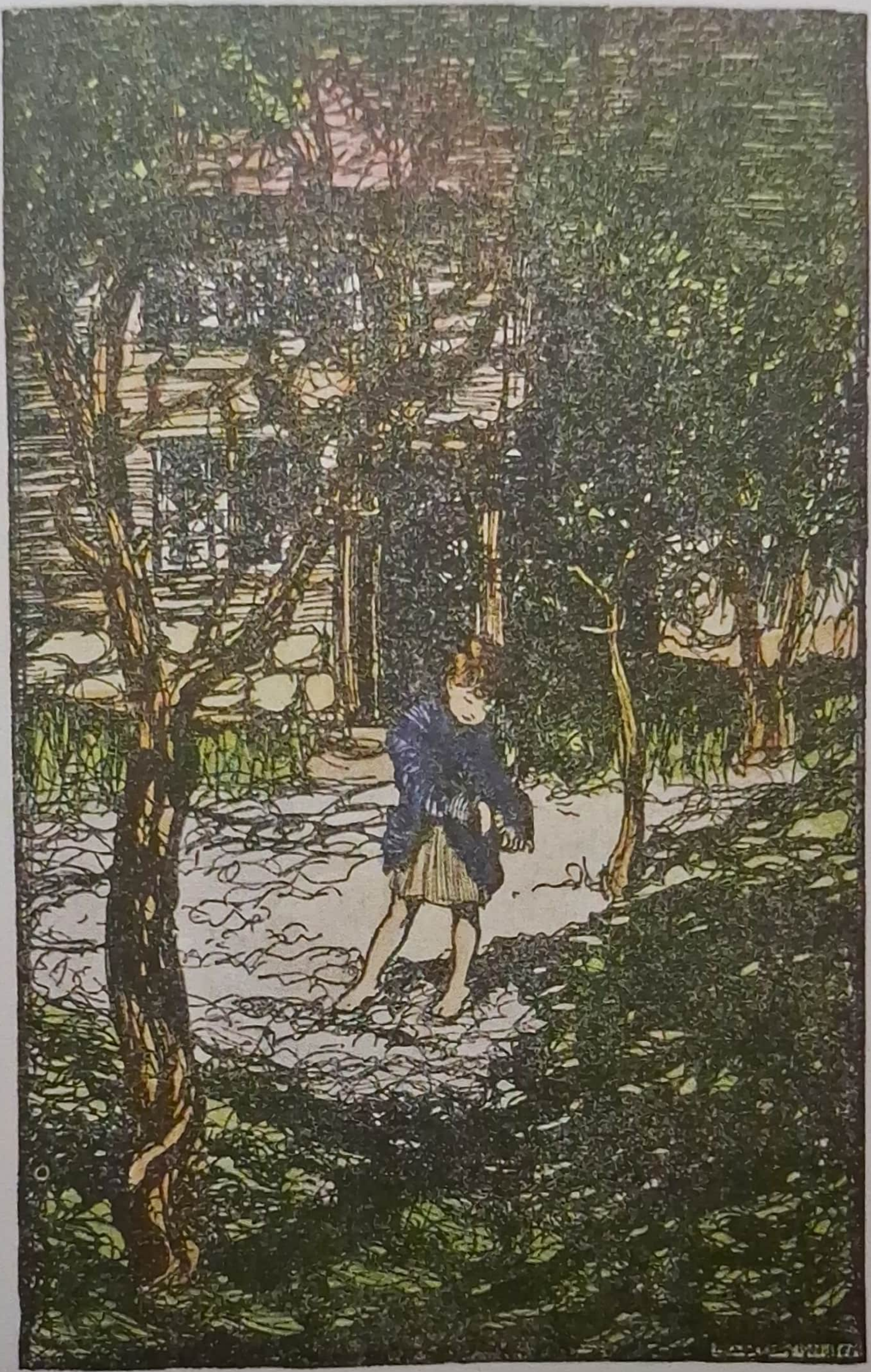
'I'll tell you what, husband,' answered the woman, 'early tomorrow morning we will take the children out into the forest to where it is the thickest; there we will light a fire for them, and give each of them one last piece of bread, and then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and we shall be rid of them.'

'No, wife,' said the man, 'I will not do that; how can I bear to leave my children alone in the forest? The wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces.'

'Oh, you fool!' said she; 'then we must all four die of hunger; you may as well plane the planks for our coffins,' and she left him no peace until he consented.

'But I feel very sorry for the poor children, all the same,' said the man.

The two children had also not been able to sleep for hunger and had heard what their stepmother had said to their father. Gretel wept bitter tears, and said to Hansel: 'Now all is over with us.'



‘Be quiet, Gretel,’ said Hansel, ‘do not distress yourself, I will soon find a way to help us.’ And when the old folk had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below and crept outside.

The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay in front of the house glittered like real silver pennies. Hansel stooped and stuffed the little pocket of his coat with as many as he could get in. Then he went back and said to Gretel: 'Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace, God will not forsake us,' and he lay down again in his bed.

When day dawned, but before the sun had risen, the woman came and awoke the two children, saying: 'Get up, you sluggards! we are going into the forest to fetch wood.' She gave each a little piece of bread, and said: 'There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it up before then, for you will get nothing else.'

Gretel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the pebbles in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest. When they had walked a short time, Hansel stood still and peeped back at the house, and did so again and again. His father said: 'Hansel, what are you looking at there and staying behind for? Pay attention, and do not forget how to use your legs.'

'Ah, father,' said Hansel, 'I am looking at my little white cat; she is sitting up on the roof, and wants to say goodbye to me.'

The wife said: 'Fool, that is not your little cat, that is the morning sun which is shining on the chimneys.'

Hansel, however, had not been looking back at the cat, but had been constantly throwing one of the white pebble-stones out of his pocket on the road.

When they had reached the middle of the forest, the father said: 'Now, children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire that you may not be cold.'

Hansel and Gretel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames were burning very high, the woman said: 'Now, children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest; we will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we have done, we will come back and fetch you away.'

Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread, and as they heard the strokes of the wood-axe they believed that their father was near. It was not the axe, however, but a branch which he had fastened to a withered tree which the wind was blowing backwards and forwards. And as they had been sitting such a long time, their eyes closed with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When at last they awoke, it was already dark night.

Gretel began to cry and said: 'How are we to get out of the forest now?'

But Hansel comforted her and said: 'Just wait a little, until the moon has risen, and then we will soon find the way.'

And when the full moon had risen, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like newly-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and by break of day came once more to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Gretel, she said: 'You naughty children, why have you slept so long in the forest? We thought you were never coming back at all!' The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone.

Not long afterwards, there was once more great dearth throughout the land, and the children heard their mother saying at night to their father:

'Everything is eaten again, we have one half-loaf left, and that is the end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again; there is no other means of saving ourselves!' The man's heart was heavy, and he thought: 'It would be better for me to share the last mouthful with my children.' The woman, however, would listen to nothing that he had to say, but scolded and reproached him. He who says A must say B, likewise, and as he had yielded the first time, he had to do so a second time also.

The children, however, were still awake and had heard the conversation. When the old folk were asleep, Hansel again got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles as he had done before, but the woman had locked the door, and Hansel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said: 'Do not cry, Gretel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us.'

Early in the morning came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. Their piece of bread was given to them, but it was still smaller than the time before. On the way into the forest Hansel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground.

'Hansel, why do you stop and look round?' said the father. 'Come on, do.'

'I am looking back at my little pigeon which is sitting on the roof and wants to say goodbye to me,' answered Hansel.

'Fool!' said the woman, 'that is not your little pigeon, that is the morning sun that is shining on the chimney.'

Hansel, however, little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path.

The woman led the children still deeper into the forest, where they had never in their lives been before. Then a great fire was again made, and the mother said: 'Just sit there, you children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little; we are going into the forest to cut wood, and in the evening when we are done, we will come and fetch you away.'

When it was noon, Gretel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, who had scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep and evening passed, but no one came to the poor children. They did not awake until it was dark night, and Hansel comforted his little sister and said: 'Just wait, Gretel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewn about; they will show us our way home again.'

When the moon came they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds which fly about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel said to Gretel: 'We shall soon find the way,' but they did not find it. They walked the whole night and all the next day too, from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the forest, and they were very hungry for they had had nothing to eat but two or three berries which grew on the ground. And as they were so weary that their legs would carry them no longer, they lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

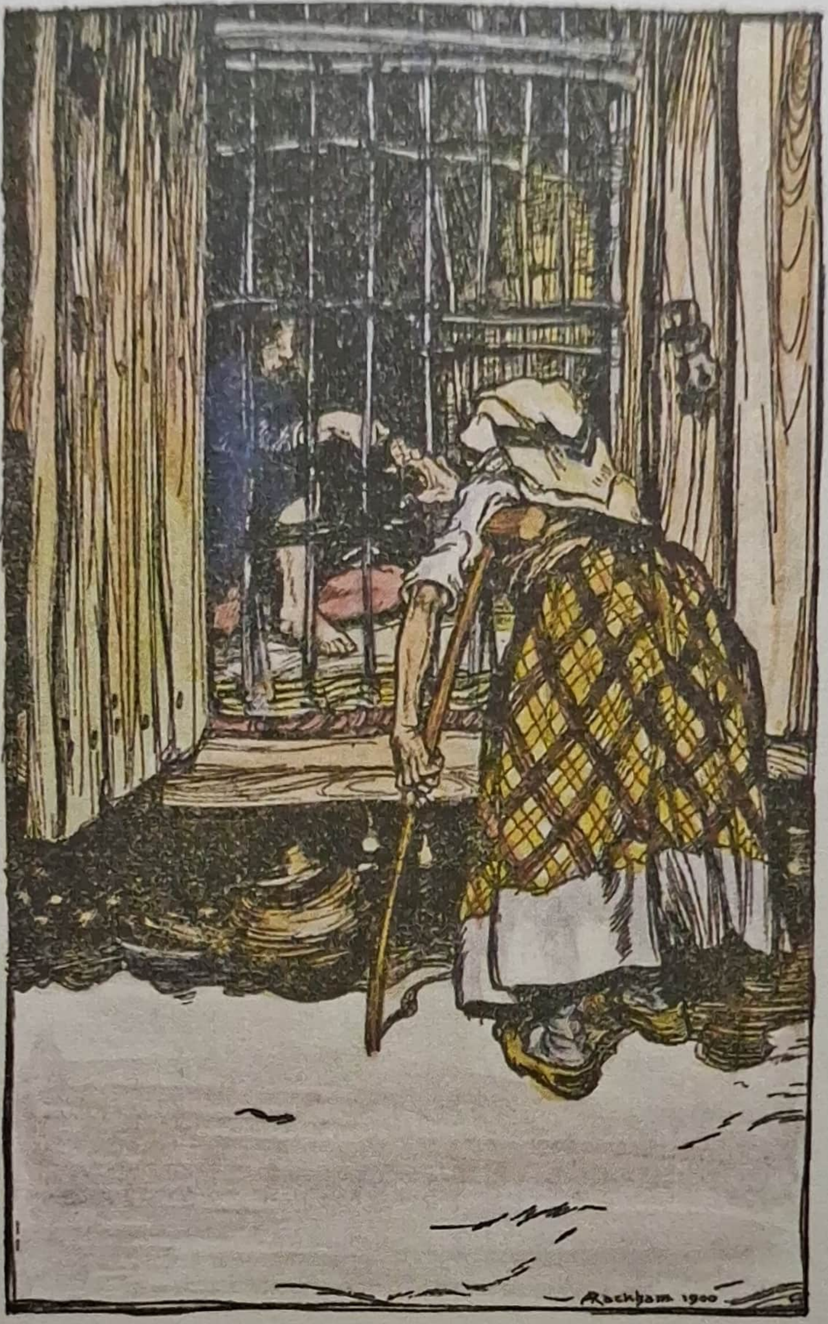
It was now three mornings since they had left their father's house. They began to walk again, but they always came deeper into the forest, and if help did not come soon, they must die of hunger and weariness. When it was midday, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a bough, which sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it.

And when its song was over, it spread its wings and flew away before them, and they followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted; and when they approached the little house they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar. 'We will set to work on that,' said Hansel, 'and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you Gretel, can eat some of the window, it will taste sweet.' Hansel reached up and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted, and Gretel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the parlour: 'Nibble, nibble, gnaw.
Who is nibbling at my little house?'

The children answered: 'The wind, the wind, the heaven-born wind,' and went on eating without disturbing themselves. Hansel, who liked the taste of the roof, tore down a great piece of it, and Gretel pushed out the whole of one round windowpane and sat down on the ground to enjoy it.

Suddenly the door opened, and a woman as old as the hills, who supported herself on crutches, came hobbling out. Hansel and Gretel were so terribly frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands. The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said: 'Oh, you dear children, who has brought you here? Do come in, and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you.'

She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then good food was set before them, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples and nuts. Afterwards two pretty little beds were covered with clean white linen, and Hansel and Gretel lay down in them, and thought they were in heaven.



The old woman had only pretended to be so kind; she was in reality a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had only built the little house of bread in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked and ate it, and that was a feast day with her. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen sense of smell like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near. When Hansel and Gretel came into her neighbourhood, she laughed with malice, and said mockingly: 'I have them, they shall not escape me!'

Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was already up, and when she saw both of them sleeping and looking so pretty, with their plump and rosy cheeks, she muttered to herself: 'That will be a dainty mouthful!' Then she seized Hansel with her shrivelled hand, carried him into a little stable, and locked him in behind a grated door. Scream as he might, it would not help him. Then she went to Gretel, shook her till she awoke, and cried: 'Get up, lazy thing, fetch some water, and cook something good for your brother; he is in the stable outside, and is to be made fat. When he is fat, I will eat him.' Gretel began to weep bitterly, but it was all in vain, for she was forced to do what the wicked witch commanded.

And now the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Gretel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried: 'Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel if you will soon be fat.' Hansel, however, stretched out a little bone to her, and the old woman, who had dim eyes, could not see it, and thought it was Hansel's finger, and was astonished that there was no way of fattening him.

When four weeks had gone by, and Hansel still remained thin, she was seized with impatience and would not wait any longer. 'Now, then, Gretel,' she cried to the girl, 'stir yourself, and bring some water. Let Hansel be fat or lean, tomorrow I will kill him, and cook him.'

Ah, how the poor little sister did lament when she had to fetch the water, and how her tears did flow down her cheeks! 'Dear God, do help us,' she cried.

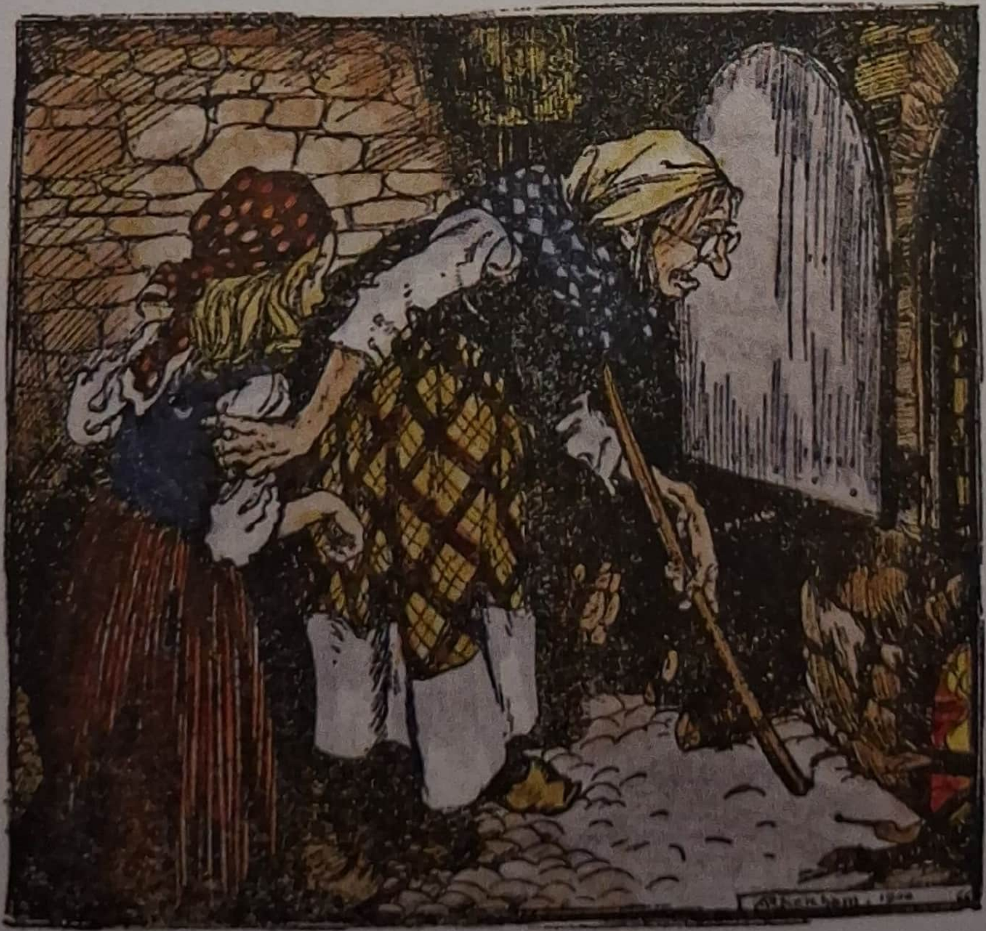
'If the wild beasts in the forest had but devoured us, we should at any rate have died together.'

'Just keep your noise to yourself,' said the old woman, 'it won't help you at all.'

Early in the morning, Gretel had to go out and hang up the cauldron with the water, and light the fire.

'We will bake first,' said the old woman, 'I have already heated the oven, and kneaded the dough.' She pushed poor Gretel out to the oven, from which flames of fire were already darting. 'Creep in,' said the witch, 'and see if it is properly heated, so that we can put the bread in.'

Once Gretel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and let her bake in it, and then she would eat her,



too. But Gretel saw what she had in mind, and said: 'I do not know how I am to do it; how do I get in?'

'Silly goose,' said the old woman. 'The door is big enough; just look, I can get in myself!' and she crept up and thrust her head into the oven. Then Gretel gave her a push that drove her far into it, and shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt. Oh! Then she began to howl quite horribly, but Gretel ran away and the wicked witch was miserably burnt to death.

Gretel, however, ran like lightning to Hansel, opened his little stable, and cried: 'Hansel, we are saved! The old witch is dead!' Then Hansel sprang like a bird from its cage when the door is opened. How they did rejoice and embrace each other, and dance about and kiss each other! And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the witch's house, and in every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels. 'These are far better than pebbles!' said Hansel, and thrust into his pocket whatever could be got in, and Gretel said: 'I, too, will take something home with me,' and filled her pinafore full. 'But now we must be off,' said Hansel, 'that we may get out of the witch's forest.'

When they had walked for two hours, they came to a great stretch of water. 'We cannot cross,' said Hansel, 'I see no foot-plank, and no bridge.'

'And there is alas no ferry,' answered Gretel; 'but a white duck is swimming there: if I ask her, she will help us over.' Then she cried:

'Little duck, little duck, dost thou see,
Hansel and Gretel are waiting for thee?
There's never a plank or bridge in sight,
Take us across on thy back so white.'

The duck came to them, and Hansel seated himself on its back, and told his sister to sit by him. 'No,' replied Gretel, 'that will be too heavy for the little duck; she shall take us across one after the other.' The good little duck did so, and when they were once safely across and had walked for a short time, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them, and at length they saw from afar their father's house.

Then they began to run, rushed into the parlour and threw themselves round their father's neck. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; and the woman, who had been so cruel, was dead.

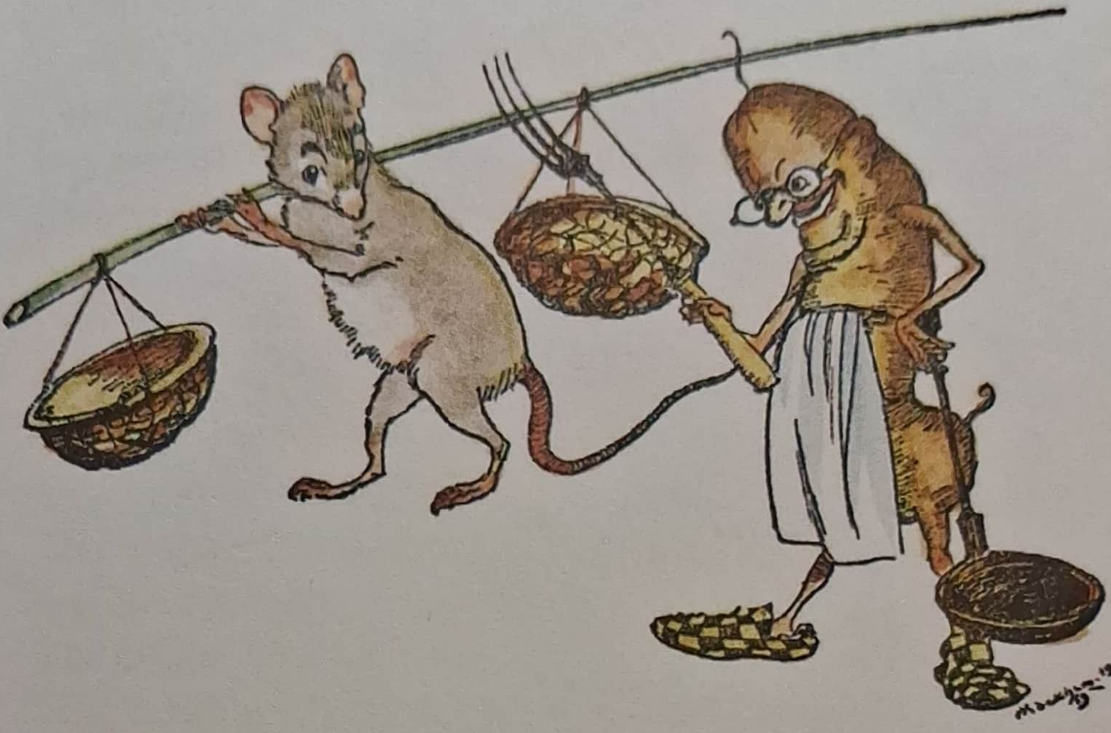
Gretel emptied her pinafore so that quantities of pearls and precious stones ran about the room, and Hansel threw one handful after another out of his pocket to add to them. Then all anxiety was at an end, and they lived together in perfect happiness.

The Mouse, the Bird and the Sausage

Once upon a time, a mouse, a bird and a sausage entered into partnership and set up house together. For a long time all went well; they lived in great comfort, and prospered so far as to be able to add considerably to their stores. The bird's duty was to fly daily into the wood and bring in fuel, the mouse fetched the water, and the sausage saw to the cooking.

When people are too well off they always begin to long for something new. And so it came to pass that the bird, while out one day, met a fellow bird, to whom he boastfully expatiated on the excellence of his household arrangements. But the other bird sneered at him for being a poor simpleton who did all the hard work while the other two stayed at home and had a good time of it. For, when the mouse had made the fire and fetched in the water, she could retire into her little room and rest until it was time to set the table. The sausage had only to watch the pot to see that the food was properly cooked, and when it was near dinner-time, he just threw himself into the broth, or rolled in and out among the vegetables three or four times, and there they were, buttered, and salted, and ready to be served. Then, when the bird came home and had laid aside his burden, they sat down to table, and when they had finished their meal, they could sleep their fill till the following morning. And that was really a very delightful life.

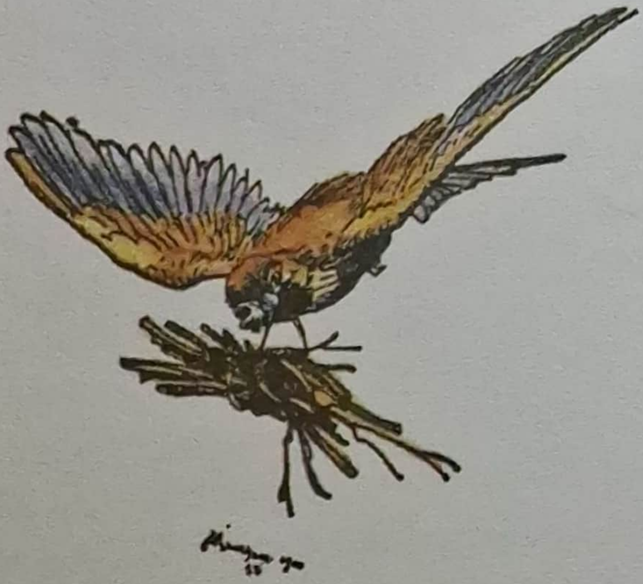
Influenced by these remarks, the bird next morning refused to bring in the wood, telling the others that he had been their servant long enough, and had been a fool into the bargain, and that it



was now time to make a change, and to try some other way of arranging the work. Beg and pray as the mouse and the sausage might, it was of no use; the bird remained master of the situation, and the venture had to be made. They therefore drew lots, and it fell to the sausage to bring in the wood, to the mouse to cook and to the bird to fetch the water.

And now what happened? The sausage started in search of wood, the bird made the fire and the mouse put on the pot, and then these two waited till the sausage returned with the fuel for the following day. But the sausage remained so long away that they became uneasy, and the bird flew out to find him. He had not flown far, however, when he came across a dog who, having met the sausage, had regarded him as his legitimate booty, and so seized and swallowed him. The bird complained to the dog of this barefaced robbery, but nothing he said was of any avail, for the dog answered that he found false credentials on the sausage, and that was the reason his life had been forfeited.

He picked up the wood, and flew sadly home, and told the mouse all he had seen and heard. They were both very unhappy, but agreed to make the best of things and to remain with one another.



So now the bird set the table, and the mouse looked after the food and, wishing to prepare it in the same way as the sausage, by rolling in and out among the vegetables to salt and butter them, she jumped into the pot; but she stopped short long before she reached the bottom, having already parted not only with her skin and hair, but also with her life.

Presently the bird came in and wanted to serve up the dinner, but he could nowhere see the cook. In his alarm and flurry, he threw the wood here and there about the floor, called and searched, but no cook was to be found. Then some of the wood that had been carelessly thrown down, caught fire and began to blaze. The bird hastened to fetch some water, but his pail fell into the well, and he after it, and as he was unable to recover himself, he was drowned.

Mother Holle

Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters; one of them was beautiful and industrious, the other ugly and lazy. The mother, however, loved the ugly and lazy one best, because she was her own daughter, and so the other, who was only her stepdaughter, was made to do all the work of the house, and was quite the Cinderella of the family. Her stepmother sent her out every day to sit by the well in the high road, there to spin until she made her fingers bleed. Now it chanced one day that some blood fell on to the spindle, and as the girl stooped over the well to wash it off, the spindle suddenly sprang out of her hand and fell into the well. She ran home, crying, to tell of her misfortune, but her stepmother spoke harshly to her, and after giving her a violent scolding, said unkindly, 'As you have let the spindle fall into the well you may go yourself and fetch it out.'

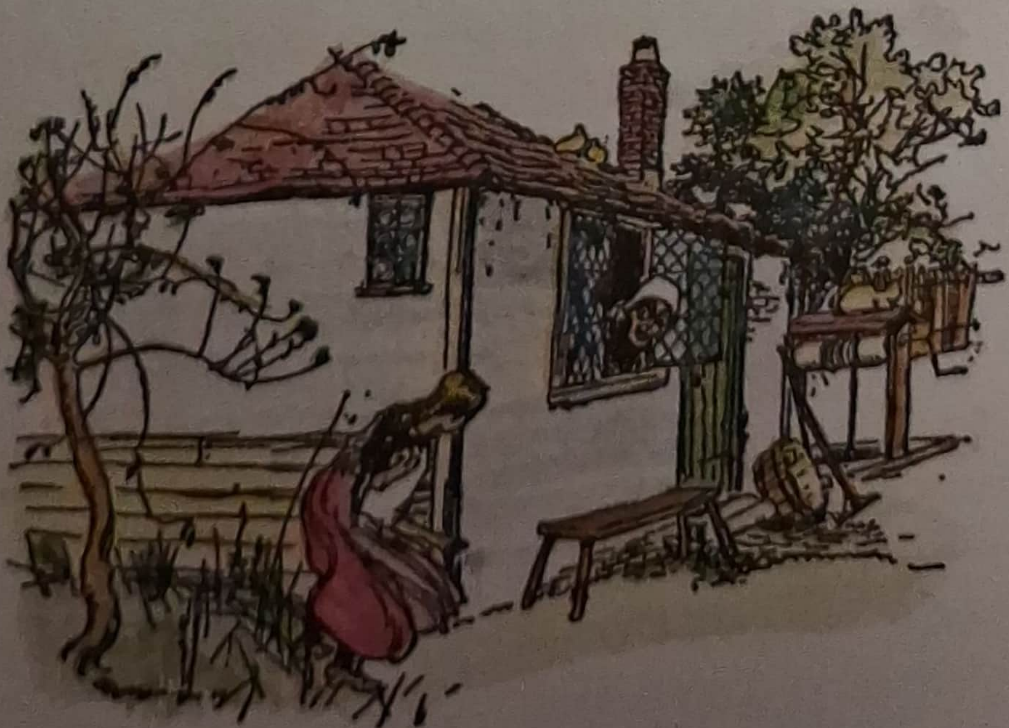
The girl went back to the well not knowing what to do, and at last in her distress she jumped into the water after the spindle.

She remembered nothing more until she awoke and found herself in a beautiful meadow, full of sunshine, and with countless flowers blooming in every direction.

She walked over the meadow, and presently she came upon a baker's oven full of bread, and the loaves cried out to her, 'Take us out, take us out, or alas! we shall be burnt to a cinder; we were baked through long ago.' So she took the bread-shovel and drew them all out.

She went on a little farther, till she came to a tree full of apples. 'Shake me, shake me, I pray,' cried the tree; 'my apples, one and all, are ripe.' So she shook the tree, and the apples came falling down upon her like rain; but she continued shaking until there was not a single apple left upon it. Then she carefully gathered the apples together in a heap and walked on again.

The next thing she came to was a little house, and there she saw an old woman looking out. She had such large teeth that the girl was terrified, and turned to run away. But the old woman called after her, 'What are you afraid of, dear child? Stay with me; if you will do the work of my house properly for me, I will make you very happy. You must be very careful, however, to make my bed in the right way, for I wish you always to shake it thoroughly, so that the feathers fly about; then they say, down there in the world, that it is snowing; for I am Mother Holle.' The old woman spoke so kindly, that the girl summoned up courage and agreed to enter into her service.



She took care to do everything according to the old woman's bidding and every time she made the bed she shook it with all her might, so that the feathers flew about like so many snowflakes. The old woman was as good as her word: she never spoke angrily to her, and gave her roast and boiled meats every day.

So she stayed on with Mother Holle for some time, but then she began to grow unhappy. She could not at first tell why she felt sad, but she became conscious at last of great longing to go home; then she knew she was homesick, although she was a thousand times better off with Mother Holle than with her mother and sister. After waiting awhile, she went to Mother Holle and said, 'I am so homesick that I cannot stay with you any longer, for although I am so happy here, I must return to my own people.'

Then Mother Holle said, 'I am pleased that you should want to go back to your own people, and as you have served me so well and faithfully, I will take you home myself.'

Thereupon she led the girl by the hand up to a broad gateway. The gate was opened, and as the girl passed through, a shower of gold fell upon her, and the gold clung to her, so that she was covered with it from head to foot.

'That is a reward for your industry,' said Mother Holle, and as she spoke she handed her the spindle which she had dropped into the well.

The gate was then closed, and the girl found herself back in the old world close to her stepmother's house. As she entered the courtyard, the cock who was perched on the well called out: 'Cock-a-doodle-doo! Your golden daughter's come back to you.'

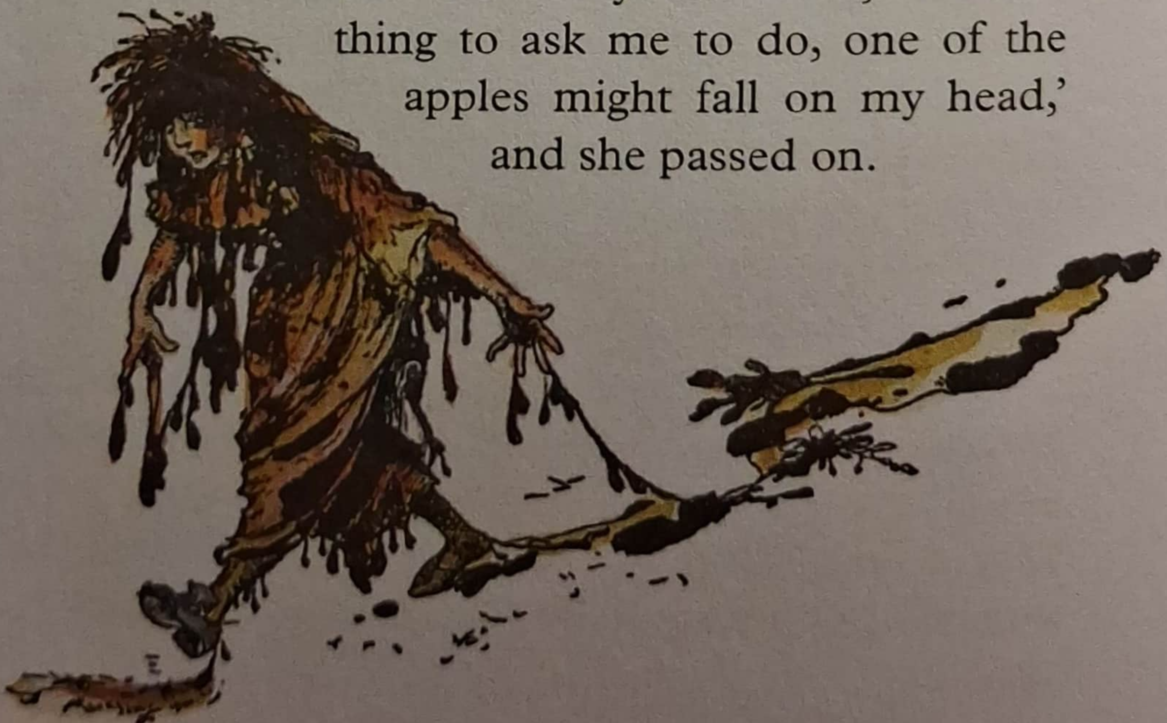
Then she went in to her mother and sister, and as she was so richly covered with gold, they gave her a warm welcome. She related to them all that had happened, and when the mother heard how she had come by her great riches, she thought she should like her ugly, lazy daughter to go and try her fortune. So she made the sister go and sit by the well and spin; and the girl thrust her hand into a thorn bush and pricked her finger, so that she might drop some blood on to the spindle; then she threw it into the well and jumped in herself.

Like her sister she awoke in the beautiful meadow, and walked over it till she came to the oven. 'Take us out, take us out, or alas! we shall be burnt to a cinder; we were baked through long ago,' cried the loaves as before.

But the lazy girl answered, 'Do you think I am going to dirty my hands for you?' and walked on.

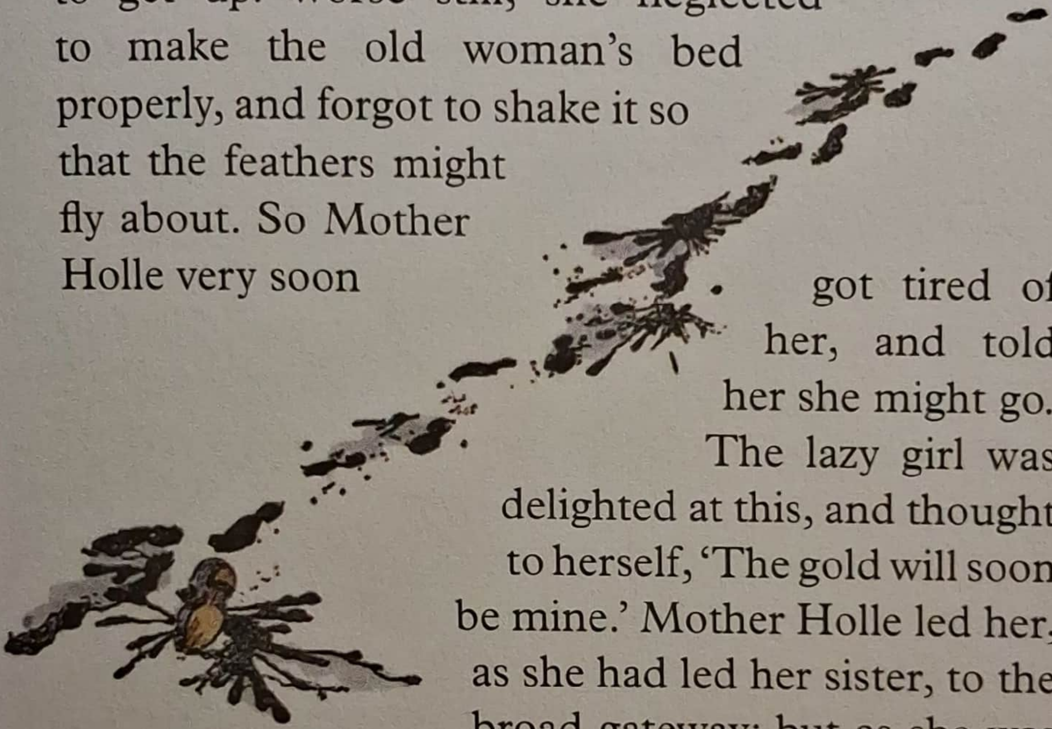
Presently she came to the apple tree. 'Shake me, shake me, I pray; my apples, one and all, are ripe,' it cried.

But she only answered, 'A nice thing to ask me to do, one of the apples might fall on my head,' and she passed on.



At last she came to Mother Holle's house, and as she had heard all about the large teeth from her sister, she was not afraid of them, and engaged herself without delay to the old woman.

The first day she was very obedient and industrious, and exerted herself to please Mother Holle, for she thought of the gold she should get in return. The next day, however, she began to dawdle over her work, and the third day she was more idle still; then she began to lie in bed in the mornings and refused to get up. Worse still, she neglected to make the old woman's bed properly, and forgot to shake it so that the feathers might fly about. So Mother Holle very soon got tired of her, and told her she might go. The lazy girl was delighted at this, and thought to herself, 'The gold will soon be mine.' Mother Holle led her, as she had led her sister, to the broad gateway; but as she was passing through, instead of the shower of gold, a great bucketful of pitch came pouring over her.



'That is in return for your services,' said the old woman, and she shut the gate.

So the lazy girl had to go home covered with pitch, and the cock on the well called out: 'Cock-a-doodle-doo! Your dirty daughter's come back to you.'

And, try as she would, she could not get the pitch off and it stuck to her as long as she lived.

Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was always called 'Little Red Riding Hood'.

One day her mother said to her: 'Come, Little Red Riding Hood, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine; take them to your grandmother, for she is ill and weak and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing; and when you go into her room, don't forget to say, 'Good-morning', and don't peep into every corner before you do it.'

'I will take great care,' said Little Red Riding Hood to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red Riding Hood entered the wood, a wolf met her. Little Red Riding Hood did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

'Good-day, Little Red Riding Hood,' said he.

'Thank you kindly, wolf.'

'Whither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?'

'To my grandmother's.'

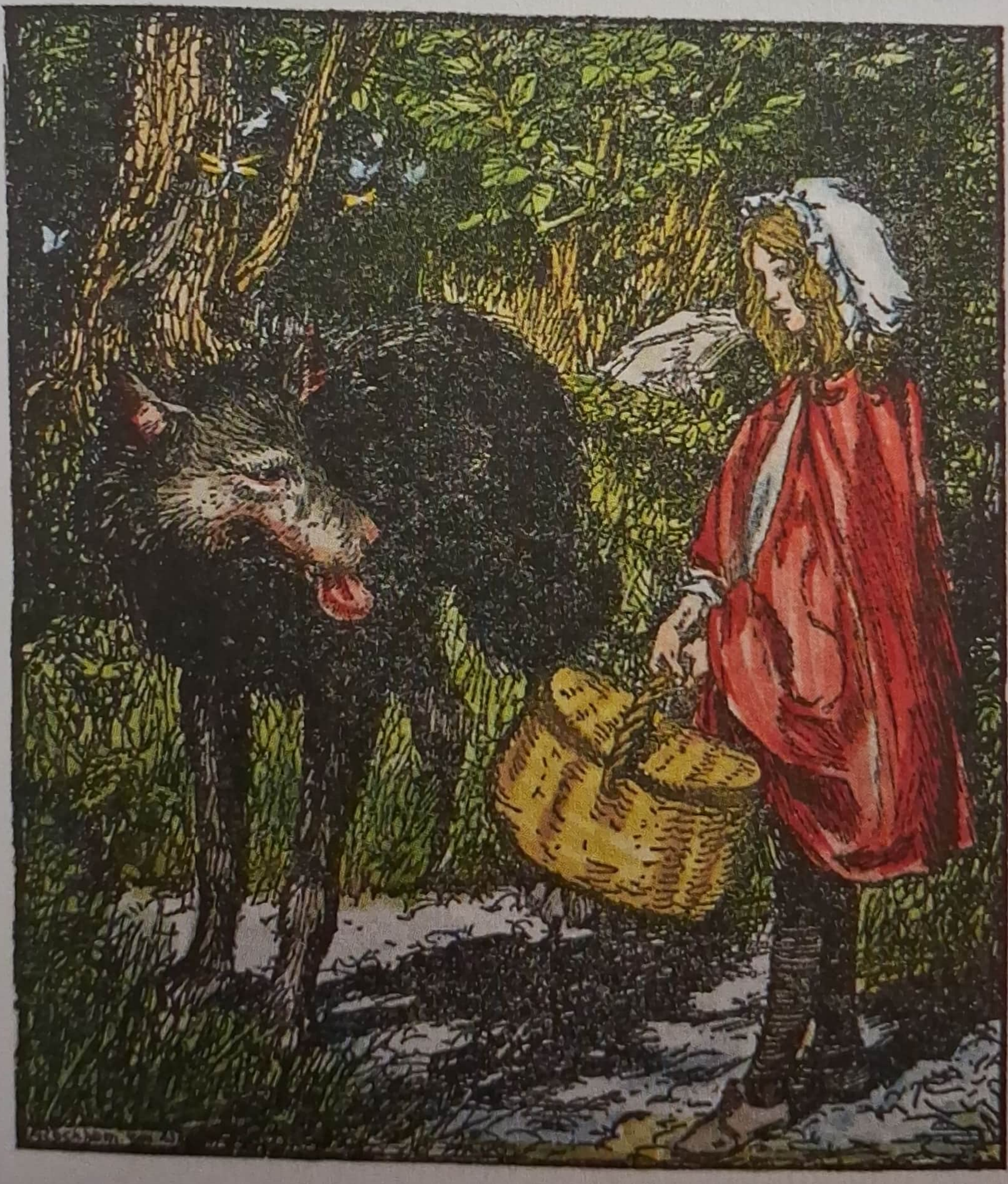
'What have you got in your apron?'

'Cake and wine; yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger.'

'Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Riding Hood?'

'A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood; her house stands under the three large oak trees, the nut trees are just below; you surely must know it,' replied Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf thought to himself: 'What a tender young creature! What a nice plump mouthful – she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily,



so as to catch both.' So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood, and then he said: 'Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here – why do you not look round? I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing; you walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry.'

Little Red Riding Hood raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought: 'Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay; that would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time;' and so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

'Who is there?'

'Little Red Riding Hood,' replied the wolf. 'I have brought cake and wine; open the door.'

'Lift the latch,' called out the grandmother. 'I am too weak, and cannot get up.'

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red Riding Hood, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself: 'Oh dear! How uneasy I feel today, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.' She called out: 'Good-morning,' but received no answer; so she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother wearing her cap all askew and looking very strange.

'Oh, grandmother,' she said, 'what big ears you have!'

'The better to hear you with, my child,' was the reply.

'But, grandmother, what big eyes you have!' she said.

'The better to see you with, my dear.'

'But, grandmother, what large hands you have!'

'The better to hug you with.'

'Oh but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!'

'The better to eat you with!'

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and had swallowed up Little Red Riding Hood.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself: 'How the old woman is snoring! I must just see if she wants anything.' So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. 'Do I find you here, you old sinner!' said he. 'I have long sought you!' Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf. When he had made two snips, he saw the little red riding hood shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying: 'Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf!' After that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Little Red Riding Hood, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf's skin and went home with it; the grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Little Red Riding Hood had brought and was greatly revived; and Little Red Riding Hood thought to herself: 'As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.'

And so it happened that when Little Red Riding Hood was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, and another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path, Little Red Riding Hood was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that he had said 'good-morning' to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up.

'Well,' said the grandmother, 'we will shut the door, that he may not come in.'

Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried:

'Open the door, grandmother, I am Little Red Riding Hood, and am bringing you some cakes.'

But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard crept twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Little Red Riding Hood went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness.

But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the child: 'Take the pail, Little Red Riding Hood; I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough.' Little Red Riding Hood made sure the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough and was drowned. So Little Red Riding Hood went joyously home, and no one ever did anything to harm her again.

The Robber Bridegroom

There was once a miller who had one beautiful daughter, and as she was grown up, he was anxious that she should be well married and provided for. He said to himself, 'I will give her to the first suitable man who comes and asks for her hand.' Not long after a suitor appeared, and as he appeared to be very rich and the miller could see nothing in him with which to find fault, he betrothed his daughter to him. But the girl did not care for the man as a girl ought to care for her betrothed husband. She did not feel that she could trust him, and she could not look at him nor think of him without an inward shudder.

One day he said to her, 'You have not yet paid me a visit, although we have been betrothed for some time.'

'I do not know where your house is,' she answered.

'My house is out there in the dark forest,' he said.

She tried to excuse herself by saying that she would not be able to find the way thither.

Her betrothed only replied, 'You must come and see me next Sunday; I have already invited guests for that day, and that you may not mistake the way, I will strew ashes along the path.'

When Sunday came, and it was time for the girl to start, a feeling of dread came over her which she could not explain, and that she might be able to find her path again, she filled her pockets with peas and lentils to sprinkle on the ground as she went along. On reaching the entrance to the forest she found the path strewn with ashes, and these she followed, throwing down some peas on either side of her at every step she took.

She walked the whole day until she came to the deepest, darkest part of the forest. There she saw a lonely house, looking so grim and mysterious that it did not please her at all. She stepped inside, but not a soul was to be seen, and a great silence reigned throughout.

Suddenly a voice cried:

> 'Turn back, turn back, young maiden fair,
> Linger not in this murderers' lair.'

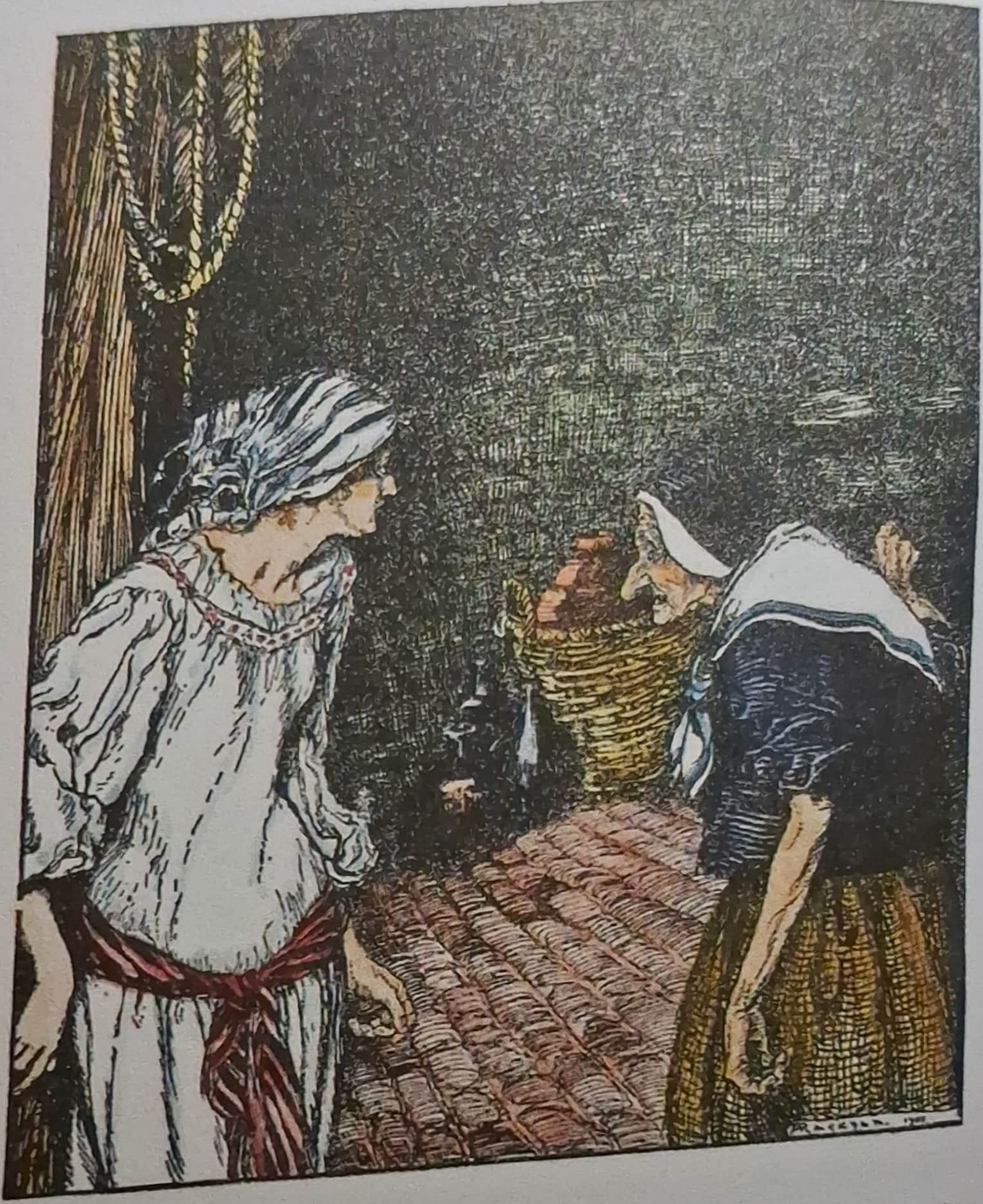
The girl looked up and saw that the voice came from a bird hanging in a cage on the wall. Again it cried:

> 'Turn back, turn back, young maiden fair,
> Linger not in this murderers' lair.'

The girl passed on, going from room to room of the house, but they were all empty and still she saw no one. At last she came to the cellar, and there sat a very, very old woman, who could not keep her head from shaking. 'Can you tell me,' asked the girl, 'if my betrothed husband lives here?'

'Ah, you poor child,' answered the old woman, 'what a place for you to come to! This is a murderers' den. You think yourself a promised bride, and that your marriage will soon take place, but it is with death that you will keep your marriage feast. Look, do you see that large cauldron of water which I am obliged to keep on the fire? As soon as they have you in their power they will kill you without mercy, and cook and eat you, for they are eaters of men. If I did not take pity on you and save you, you would be lost.'

Thereupon the old woman led her behind a large cask, which quite hid her from view. 'Keep as still



as a mouse,' she said; 'do not move or speak, or it will be all over with you. Tonight, when the robbers are all asleep, we will flee together. I have long been waiting for an opportunity to escape.'

The words were hardly out of her mouth when the murderous crew returned, dragging another young girl along with them. They were all drunk, and paid no heed to her cries and lamentations. They gave her wine to drink, three glasses full, one of white wine, one of red and one of yellow, and with that her heart gave way and she died. Then they tore of her dainty clothing, laid her on a table, and cut her beautiful body into pieces, and sprinkled salt upon it.

The poor betrothed girl crouched trembling and shuddering behind the cask, for she saw what a terrible fate had been intended for her by the robbers. One of them now noticed a gold ring still remaining on the little finger of the murdered girl, and as he could not draw it off easily, he took a hatchet and cut off the finger; but the finger sprang into the air, and fell behind the cask into the lap of the girl who was hiding there. The robber took a light and began looking for it, but he could not find it.

'Have you looked behind the large cask?' said one of the others.

But the old woman called out, 'Come and eat your supper, and let the thing be till tomorrow; the finger won't run away.'

'The old woman is right,' said the robbers, and they ceased looking for the finger and sat down.

The old woman then mixed a sleeping draught with their wine, and before long they were all lying on the floor of the cellar, fast asleep and snoring. As soon as the girl was assured of this, she came from behind the cask. She was obliged to step over the bodies of the sleepers, who were lying close together, and every moment she was filled with renewed dread lest she should awaken them. But God helped her, so that she passed safely over them, and then she and the old woman went upstairs, opened the door, and hastened as fast as they could from the murderers' den. They found the ashes scattered by the wind, but the peas and lentils had sprouted and grown sufficiently above the ground to guide them in the moonlight along the path. All night long they walked, and it was morning before they reached the mill. There the girl told her father all that had happened.

The day came that had been fixed for the marriage. The bridegroom arrived and also a large company of guests, for the miller had taken care to invite all his friends and relations. As they sat at the feast, each guest in turn was asked to tell a tale; the bride sat still and did not say a word.

'And you, my love,' said the bridegroom, turning to her, 'is there no tale you know? Tell us something.'

'I will tell you a dream, then,' said the bride. 'I went alone through a forest and came at last to a house; not a soul could I find within, but a bird that was hanging in a cage on the wall cried:

"Turn back, turn back, young maiden fair,
Linger not in this murderers' lair."

and again a second time it said these words.'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'I went on through the house from room to room, but they were all empty, and everything was so grim and mysterious. At last I went down to the cellar, and there sat a very, very old woman, who could not keep her head still. I asked her if my betrothed lived here, and she answered, "Ah, you poor child, you are come to a murderers' den; your betrothed does indeed live here, but he will kill you without mercy and afterwards cook and eat you."

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'The old woman hid me behind a large cask, and scarcely had she done this when the robbers returned home, dragging a young girl along with them. They gave her three kinds of wine to drink, white, red and yellow, and with that she died.'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'Then they tore off her dainty clothing and cut her beautiful body into pieces and sprinkled salt upon it.'

'My darling, this is only a dream.'

'And one of the robbers saw that there was a gold ring still left on her finger, and as it was difficult to draw off, he took a hatchet and cut off her finger; but the finger sprang into the air and fell behind the great cask into my lap. And here is the finger with the ring.' And with these words the bride drew forth the finger and showed it to the assembled guests.

The bridegroom, who during this recital had grown deadly pale, up and tried to escape, but the guests seized him and held him fast. They delivered him up to justice, and he and all his murderous band were condemned to death for their wicked deeds.

Tom Thumb

A poor woodman sat in his cottage one night, smoking his pipe by the fireside, while his wife sat by his side spinning. 'How lonely it is, wife,' said he, as he puffed out a long curl of smoke, 'for you and me to sit here by ourselves, without any children to play about and amuse us, while other people seem so happy and merry with their children!'

'What you say is very true,' said the wife, sighing, and turning round her wheel; 'how happy should I be if I had but one child! If it were ever so small – nay, if it were no bigger than my thumb – I should be very happy, and love it dearly.' Now – odd as you may think it – it came to pass that this good woman's wish was fulfilled, just in the very way she had wished it; for, not long afterwards, she had a little boy, who was quite healthy and strong, but was not much bigger than my thumb. So they said, 'Well, we cannot say we have not got what we wished for, and, little as he is, we will love him dearly.' And they called him Thomas Thumb.

They gave him plenty of food, yet for all they could do he never grew bigger, but kept just the same size as he had been when he was born. Still, his eyes were sharp and sparkling, and he soon showed himself to be a clever little fellow, who always knew well what he was about.

One day, as the woodman was getting ready to go into the wood to cut fuel, he said, 'I wish I had someone to bring the cart after me, for I want to make haste.'

'Oh, father,' cried Tom, 'I will take care of that; the cart shall be in the wood by the time you want it.'

Then the woodman laughed, and said, 'How can that be? You cannot reach up to the horse's bridle.'

'Never mind that, father,' said Tom; 'if my mother will only harness the horse, I will get into his ear and tell him which way to go.'

'Well,' said the father, 'we will try for once.'

When the time came the mother harnessed the horse to the cart, and put Tom into his ear; and as he sat there the little man told the beast how to go, crying out, 'Go on!' and 'Stop!' as he wanted, and thus the horse went on just as well as if the woodman had driven it himself into the wood.

It happened that as the horse was going a little too fast, and Tom was calling out, 'Gently! Gently!' two strangers came up.

'What an odd thing that is!' said one. 'There is a cart going along, and I hear a carter talking to the horse, but yet I can see no one.'

'That is queer, indeed,' said the other; 'let us follow the cart, and see where it goes.'

So they went on into the wood, till at last they came to the place where the woodman was. Then Tom Thumb, seeing his father, cried out, 'See, father, here I am with the cart, all safe and sound! Now take me down!' So his father took hold of the horse with one hand, and with the other took his son out of the horse's ear, and put him down upon a straw, where he sat as merry as you please.

The two strangers were all this time looking on, and did not know what to say for wonder. At last one took the other aside, and said, 'That little urchin will make our fortune, if we can get him and carry him about from town to town as a show; we must buy him.' So they went up to the woodman and asked him what he would take for the little man.

'He will be better off,' said they, 'with us than with you.'

'I won't sell him at all,' said the father; 'my own flesh and blood is dearer to me than all the silver and gold in the world.'

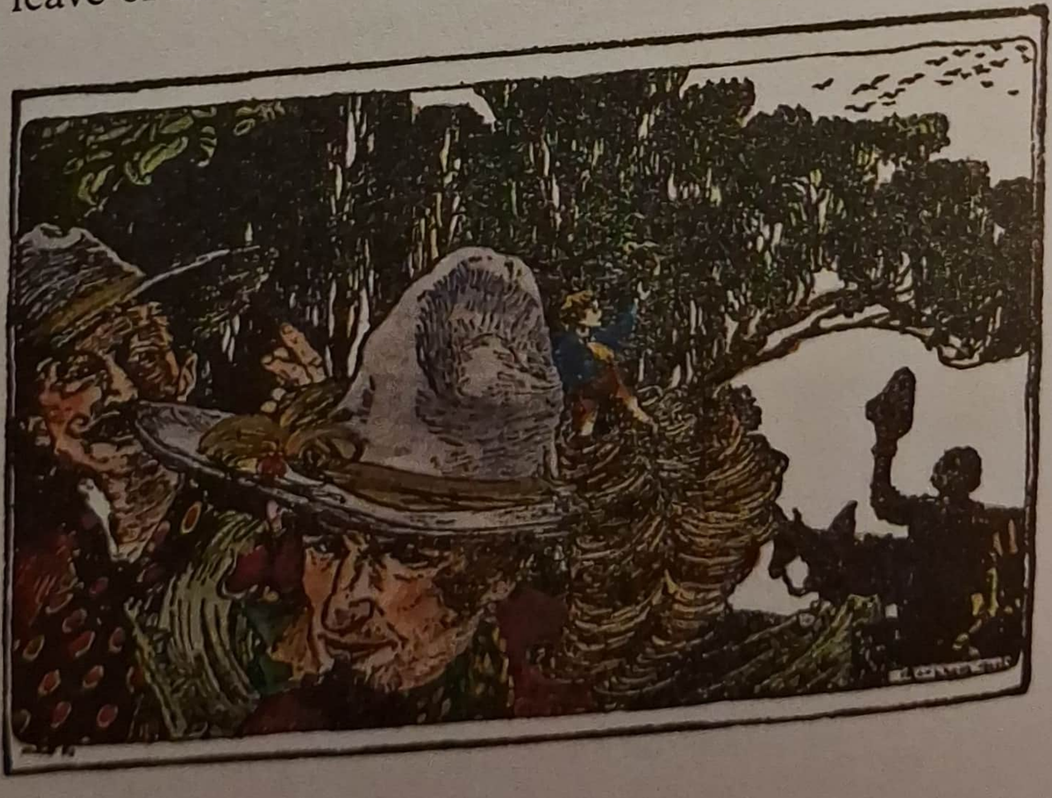
But Tom, hearing of the bargain they wanted to make, crept up his father's coat to his shoulder and whispered in his ear, 'Take the money, father, and let them have me; I'll soon come back to you.'

So the woodman at last said he would sell Tom to the strangers for a large piece of gold, and they paid the price.

'Where would you like to sit?' said one of them.

'Oh, put me on the rim of your hat; that will be a nice gallery for me; I can walk about there and see the country as we go along.'

So they did as he wished; and when Tom had taken leave of his father they took him away with them.



They journeyed on till it began to be dusk, and then the little man said, 'Let me get down, I'm tired.'

So the man took off his hat, and put him down on a clod of earth in a ploughed field by the side of the road. But Tom ran about among the furrows, and at last slipped into an old mouse-hole. 'Good-night, my masters!' said he, 'I'm off! Mind and look sharp after me the next time.'

Then they ran at once to the place, and poked the ends of their sticks into the mouse-hole, but all in vain; Tom only crawled farther and farther in; and at last it became quite dark, so that they were forced to go their way without their prize, as sulky as could be.

When Tom found they were gone, he came out of his hiding-place. 'What dangerous walking it is,' said he, 'in this ploughed field! If I were to fall from one of these great clods, I should undoubtedly break my neck.' At last, by good luck, he found a large empty snail-shell. 'This is lucky,' said he, 'I can sleep here very well;' and in he crept.

Just as he was falling asleep, he heard two men passing by, chatting together; and one said to the other, 'How can we rob that rich parson's house of his silver and gold?'

'I'll tell you!' cried Tom.

'What noise was that?' said the thief, frightened; 'I'm sure I heard someone speak.'

They stood still listening, and Tom said, 'Take me with you, and I'll soon show you how to get the parson's money.'

'But where are you?' said they.

'Look about on the ground,' answered he, 'and listen where the sound comes from.'

At last the thieves found him out, and lifted him up in their hands. 'You little urchin!' they said, 'what can you do for us?'

'Why, I can get between the iron window-bars of the parson's house, and throw you out whatever you want.'

'That's a good thought,' said the thieves; 'come along, we shall see what you can do.'

When they came to the parson's house, Tom slipped through the window-bars into the room, and then called out as loud as he could bawl, 'Will you have all that is here?'

At this the thieves were frightened, and said, 'Softly, softly! Speak low, that you may not awaken anybody.'

But Tom seemed as if he did not understand them, and bawled out again, 'How much will you have? Shall I throw it all out?'

Now the cook lay in the next room; and hearing a noise she raised herself up in her bed and listened.

Meantime the thieves were frightened, and ran off a little way; but at last they plucked up their hearts, and said, 'The little urchin is only trying to make fools of us.' So they came back and whispered softly to him, saying, 'Now let us have no more of your roguish jokes; but throw us out some of the money.'

Then Tom called out as loud as he could, 'Very well! Hold your hands! Here it comes.'

The cook heard this quite plain, so she sprang out of bed, and ran to open the door. The thieves ran off as if a wolf was at their tails, while the cook, having groped about and found nothing, went away for a light. By the time she came back, Tom had slipped off into the barn; and when she had looked about and searched every hole and corner, and found nobody, she went to bed, thinking she must have been dreaming with her eyes open.

The little man crawled about in the hayloft, and at last found a snug place to finish his night's rest in; so he laid himself down, meaning to sleep till daylight and then find his way home to his father and mother. But alas! how woefully he was undone! What crosses and sorrows happen to us all in this world! The cook got up early, before daybreak, to feed the cows; and going straight to the hayloft, carried away a large bundle of hay, with the little man in the middle of it, fast asleep. He still, however, slept on, and did not awake till he found himself in the mouth of the cow; for the cook had put the hay into the cow's rick, and the cow had taken Tom up in a mouthful of it.

'Good lack-a-day!' said he, 'how came I to tumble into the mill?' But he soon found out where he really was; and was forced to have all his wits about him, that he might not get between the cow's teeth, and so be crushed to death. At last down he went into her stomach. 'It is rather dark,' said he; 'they forgot to build windows in this room to let the sun in; a candle would be no bad thing.' Though he made the best of his bad luck, he did not like his quarters at all; and the worst of it was that more and more hay was always coming down, and the space left for him became smaller and smaller. At last he cried out as loud as he could, 'Don't bring me any more hay! Don't bring me any more hay!'

The cook happened to be just then milking the cow; and hearing someone speak, but seeing nobody, and yet being quite sure it was the same voice that she had heard in the night, she was so frightened that she fell off her stool, and overset the milk-pail. As soon as she could pick herself up out of the dirt, she ran off as fast as she could to her master the parson, and said, 'Sir, sir, the cow is talking!'

But the parson said, 'Woman, you are surely mad!' However, he went with her into the cow-house, to try and see what was the matter.

Scarcely had they set foot on the threshold, when Tom called out, 'Don't bring me any more hay!'

Then the parson himself was frightened, and thinking the cow was surely bewitched, told his man to kill her on the spot. So the cow was killed, and cut up; and the stomach, in which Tom lay, was thrown out upon a dunghill.

Tom soon set himself to work to get out, which was not a very easy task; but at last, just as he had made room to get his head out, fresh ill-luck befell him. A hungry wolf sprang out, and swallowed up the whole stomach, with Tom in it, at one gulp, and ran away.

Tom, however, was still not disheartened; and thinking the wolf would not dislike having some chat with him as he was going along, he called out, 'My good friend, I can show you a famous treat.'

'Where's that?' said the wolf.

'In such and such a house,' said Tom, describing his own father's house. 'You can crawl through the drain into the kitchen and then into the pantry, and there you will find cakes, ham, beef, cold chicken, roast pig, apple-dumplings, and everything that your heart can desire.'

The wolf did not need to be asked twice; so that very night he went to the house and crawled through the drain into the kitchen, and then into the pantry, and ate and drank there to his hearts content. As soon as he had had enough he wanted to get away; but he had eaten so much that he could not go out by the same way he came in. This was just what Tom had reckoned upon; and now he began to set up a great shout, making all the noise he could.

'Will you be easy?' said the wolf; 'you'll awaken everybody in the house if you make such a clatter.'

'What's that to me?' said the little man. 'You have had your frolic, now I've a mind to be merry myself;' and he began, singing and shouting as loud as he could.

The woodman and his wife, being awakened by the noise, peeped through a crack in the door; but when they saw a wolf was there, you may well suppose that they were sadly frightened; and the woodman ran for his axe, and gave his wife a scythe. 'Do you stand behind me,' said the woodman, 'and when I have knocked him on the head you must rip him up with the scythe.'

Tom heard all this, and cried out, 'Father, father! I am here, the wolf has swallowed me.'

And his father said, 'Heaven be praised! We have found our dear child again;' and he told his wife not to use the scythe for fear she should hurt him. Then he aimed a great blow, and struck the wolf on the head, and killed him on the spot! And when he was dead they cut open his body and set Tommy free. 'Ah!' said the father, 'what fears we have had for you!'

'Yes, father,' answered he; 'I have travelled all over the world, I think, in one way or other, since we parted; and now I am very glad to come home and get fresh air again.'

'Why, where have you been?' said his father.

I have been in a mouse-hole – and in a snail-shell – and down a cow's throat – and in the wolf's belly; and yet here I am again, safe and sound.'

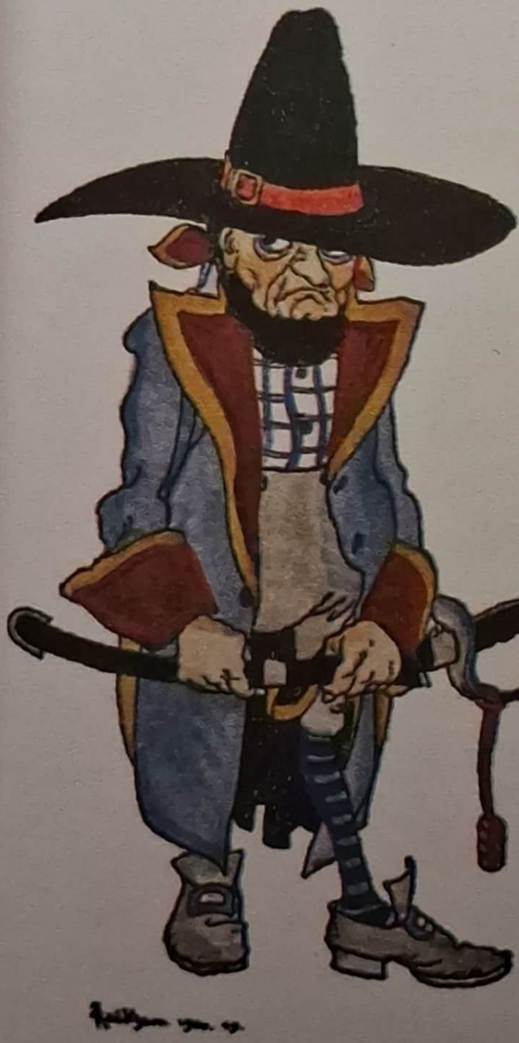
'Well,' said they, 'you are come back, and we will not sell you again for all the riches in the world.'

Then they hugged and kissed their dear little son, and gave him plenty to eat and drink, for he was very hungry; and then they fetched new clothes for him, for his old ones had been quite spoiled on his journey. So Master Thumb stayed at home with his father and mother, in peace; for though he had been so great a traveller, and had done and seen so many fine things, and was fond enough of telling the whole story, he always agreed that, after all, there's no place like home!

Rumpelstiltskin

By the side of a wood, in a country a long way off, ran a fine stream of water; and upon the stream there stood a mill. The miller's house was close by, and the miller, you must know, had a very beautiful daughter. She was, moreover, very shrewd and clever; and the miller was so proud of her that he one day told the king of the land, who used to come and hunt in the wood, that his daughter could spin gold out of straw.

Now this king was very fond of money; and when he heard the miller's boast his greediness was aroused, and he sent for the girl to be brought before him. Then he led her to a chamber in his palace where there was a great heap of straw, and gave her a spinning-wheel, and said, 'All this must be spun into gold before morning, if you love your life.' It was in vain that the poor maiden said that it was only a silly boast of her father's, and that she could do no such thing as spin straw into gold; the chamber door was locked, and she was left alone.



She had sat down in one corner of the room and begun to bewail her hard fate, when on a sudden the door opened and a droll-looking little man hobbled in and said, 'Good-morrow to you, my good lass; what are you weeping for?'

'Alas!' said she, 'I must spin this straw into gold, and I know not how.'

'What will you give me,' said the hobgoblin, 'to do it for you?'

'My necklace,' replied the maiden.

He took her at her word, and sat himself down to the wheel, and whistled and sang:

'Round about, round about,
Lo and behold!
Reel away, reel away,
Straw into gold!'

And round about the wheel went merrily, the work was quickly done, and the straw was all spun into gold.

When the king came and saw this, he was greatly astonished and pleased; but his heart grew still more greedy of gain, and he shut up the poor miller's daughter again with a fresh task. Then she knew not what to do, and sat down once more to weep; but the dwarf soon opened the door, and said, 'What will you give me to do your task?'

'The ring on my finger,' said she. So her little friend took the ring, and began to work at the wheel again, and whistled and sang:

'Round about, round about,
Lo and behold!
Reel away, reel away,
Straw into gold!'

till, long before morning, all was done again.

The king was greatly delighted to see all this glittering treasure; but still he had not enough: so he took the miller's daughter to a yet larger heap, and said, 'All this must be spun tonight; and if it is, you shall be my queen.'

As soon as she was alone the dwarf came in and said, 'What will you give me to spin gold for you this third time?'

'I have nothing left,' said she.

'Then say you will give me,' said the little man, 'the first child that you may have when you are queen.'

'That may never be,' thought the miller's daughter; and as she knew no other way to get her task done, she said she would do what he asked.

Round went the wheel again to the old song, and the manikin once more spun the heap into gold. The king came in the morning, and, finding all he wanted, was forced to keep his word; so he married the miller's daughter, and she really became queen.

At the birth of her first little child she was very glad, and forgot the dwarf, and what she had said. But one day he came into her room, where she was sitting playing with her baby, and put her in mind of it. Then she grieved sorely at her misfortune, and said she would give him all the wealth of the kingdom if he would let her off, but in vain; yet at last her tears softened him, and he said, 'I will give you three days' grace, and if during that time you tell me my name, you shall keep your child.'

Now the queen lay awake all night, thinking of all the odd names that she had ever heard; and she sent messengers all over the land to find out new ones. The next day the little man came, and she began with Timothy, Ichabod, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and all the names she could remember; but to all and each of them he said, 'Madam, that is not my name.'

The second day she began with all the comical names she could think of: Bandylegs, Hunchback, Crookshanks, and so on; but the little gentleman still said to every one of them, 'Madam, that is not my name.'

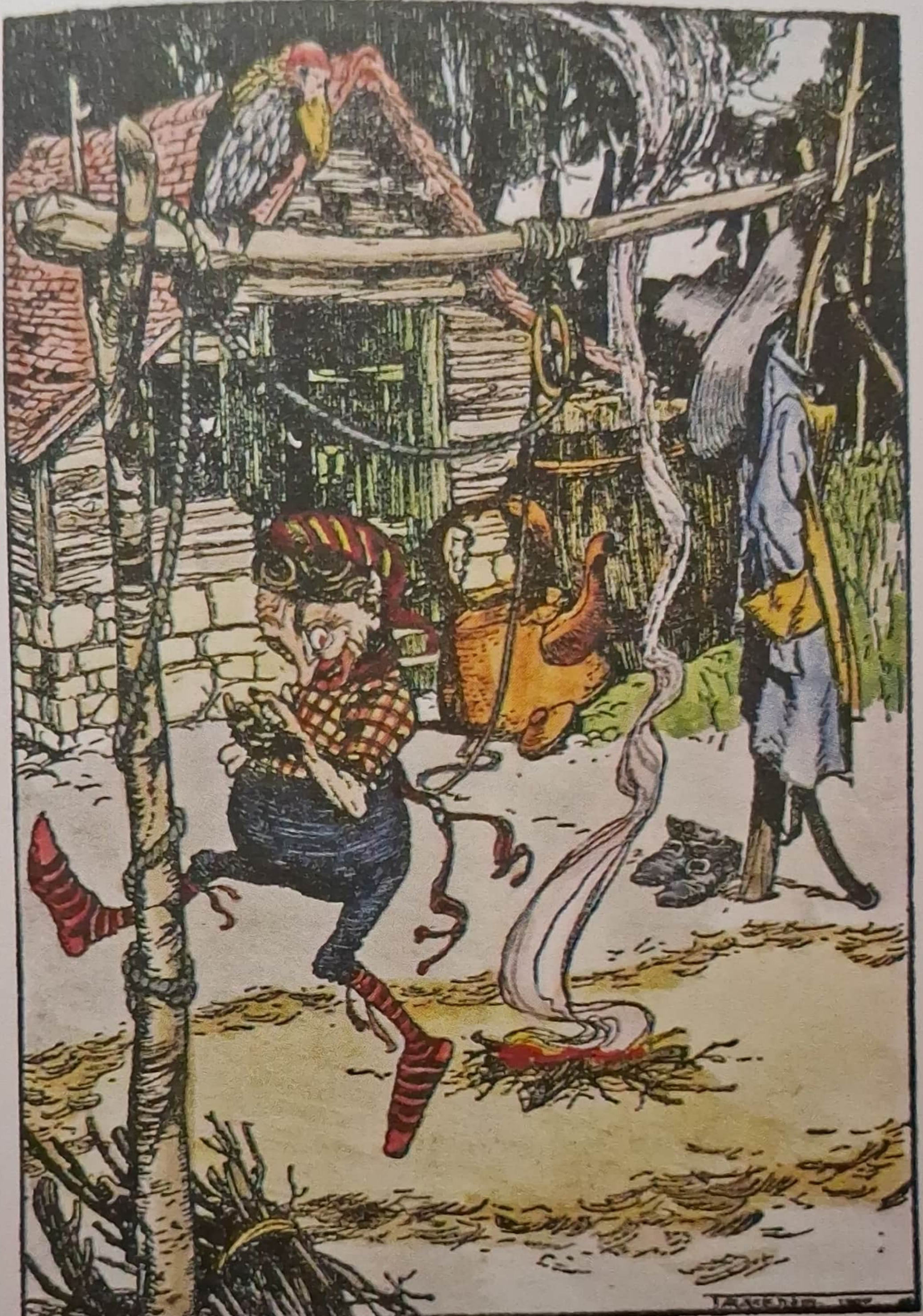
The third day one of the messengers came back, and said, 'I have travelled two days without hearing of any other names; but yesterday, as I was climbing a high hill among the trees of the forest, where the fox and the hare bid each other good-night, I saw a little hut; and before the hut burnt a fire; and round about the fire a funny little dwarf was dancing upon one leg, and singing:

"Merrily the feast I'll make.
Today I'll brew, tomorrow bake;
Merrily I'll dance and sing,
For next day will a stranger bring.
Little does my lady dream
Rumpelstiltskin is my name!"

When the queen heard this she jumped for joy, and as soon as her little friend came she sat down upon her throne, and called all her court round to enjoy the fun; and the nurse stood by her side with the baby in her arms, as if it was quite ready to be given up. Then the little man began to chuckle at the thought of having the poor child to take home with him to his hut in the woods; and he cried out, 'Now, lady, what is my name?'

'Is it John?' asked she.

'No, madam!'



'Is it Tom?'

'No, madam!'

'Is it Jemmy?'

'It is not.'

'Can your name be Rumpelstiltskin?' asked the lady slyly.

'Some witch told you that – some witch told you that!' cried the little man, and dashed his right foot in a rage so deep into the floor that he was forced to lay hold of it with both hands to pull it out.

Then he made off as best he could, while the nurse laughed and the baby crowed; and all the court jeered at him for having had so much trouble for nothing, and said, 'We wish you a very good-morning, and a merry feast, Mr Rumpelstiltskin!'

Clever Gretel

There was once a cook named Gretel, who wore shoes with red heels, and when she walked out with them on, she turned herself this way and that, was quite happy and thought: 'You certainly are a pretty girl!' And when she came home she drank, in her gladness of heart, a draught of wine, and as wine excites a desire to eat, she tasted the best of whatever she was cooking until she was satisfied, and said: 'The cook must know what the food is like.'

It came to pass that the master one day said to her: 'Gretel, there is a guest coming this evening; prepare me two fowls very daintily.'

'I will see to it, master,' answered Gretel. She killed two fowls, scalded them, plucked them, put them on the spit, and towards evening set them before the fire, that they might roast. The fowls began to turn brown, and were nearly ready, but the guest had not yet arrived. Then Gretel called out to her master: 'If the guest does not come, I must take the fowls away from the fire, but it will be a sin and a shame if they are not eaten the moment they are at their juiciest.'

The master said: 'I will run myself, and fetch the guest.'

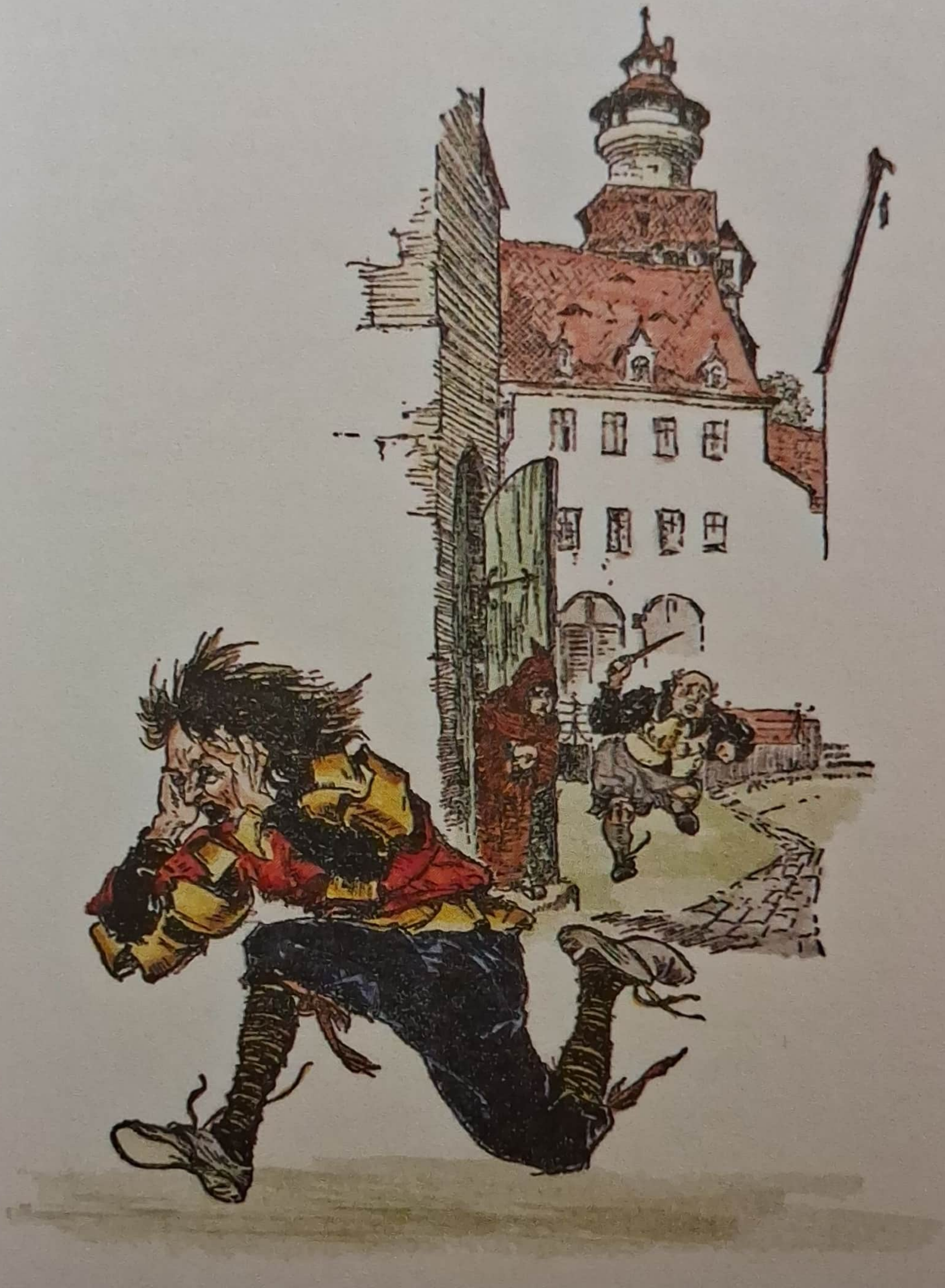
When the master had turned his back, Gretel laid the spit with the fowls on one side, and thought: 'Standing so long by the fire there, makes one sweaty and thirsty; who knows when they will come? Meanwhile, I will run into the cellar, and take a drink.'

She ran down, filled a flagon, said: 'God bless it for you, Gretel,' and took a good drink; then thinking that wine should flow on, and should not be interrupted, she took yet another hearty draught.

Then she went and put the fowls over the fire again, basted them, and drove the spit merrily round. But as the roast meat smelt so good, Gretel thought: 'Something might be wrong, it ought to be tasted!' She touched it with her finger, and said: 'Ah! how good fowls are! It certainly is a sin and a shame that they are not eaten at the right time!' She ran to the window, to see if the master was coming with his guest, but she saw no one, and went back to the fowls and thought: 'One of the wings is burning! I had better take it off and eat it.' So she cut it off, ate it, and enjoyed it, and when she had done, she thought: 'The other must go down too, or else master will observe that something is missing.'

When the two wings were eaten, she went and looked for her master, and did not see him. It suddenly occurred to her: 'Who knows? They are perhaps not coming at all, and have turned in somewhere.'

Then she said: 'Well, Gretel, enjoy yourself; one fowl has been cut into, take another drink, and eat it up entirely; when it is eaten you will have some peace; why should God's good gifts be spoilt?' So she ran into the cellar again and took an enormous drink then ate up the one chicken in great glee. When one of the chickens was swallowed down, and still her master did not come, Gretel looked at the other and said: 'What one is, the other should be likewise, the two go together; what's right for the one is right for the other; I think if I were to take another draught it would do me no harm.' So she took another hearty drink, and let the second chicken follow the first.



While she was making the most of it, her master came and cried: 'Hurry up, Gretel, the guest is coming directly after me!'

'Yes, sir, I will soon serve up,' answered Gretel.

Meantime the master looked to see that the table was properly laid, and took the great knife, wherewith he was going to carve the chickens, and sharpened it on the steps.

Presently the guest came, and knocked politely and courteously at the house-door. Gretel ran, and looked to see who was there, and when she saw the guest, she put her finger to her lips and said: ‘Hush! Hush! Go away as quickly as you can; if my master catches you it will be the worse for you; he certainly did ask you to supper, but his intention is to cut off your two ears. Just listen how he is sharpening the knife for it!’ The guest heard the sharpening, and hurried down the steps again as fast as he could.

Gretel was not idle; she ran screaming to her master, and cried: ‘You have invited a fine guest!’

‘Why, Gretel? What do you mean by that?’

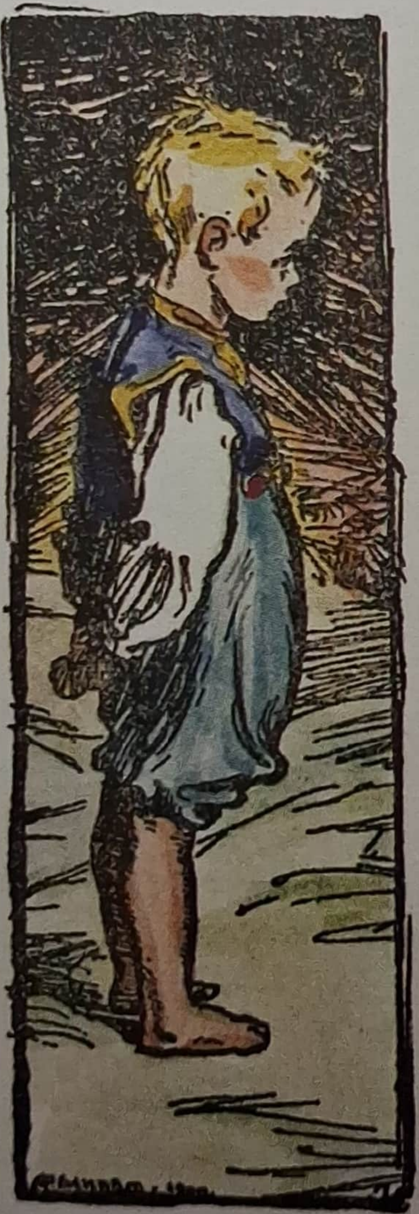
Yes,’ said she, ‘he has taken the chickens, which I was just going to serve up, off the dish, and has run away with them!’

‘That’s a nice trick!’ said her master, and lamented the fine chickens. ‘If he had but left me one, so that something remained for me to eat.’ He called to him to stop, but the guest pretended not to hear. Then he ran after him with the knife still in his hand, crying: ‘Just one, just one,’ meaning that the guest should leave him just one chicken, and not take both. The guest, however, thought no otherwise than that he was to give up one of his ears, and ran as if fire were burning under him, in order to take them both with him.

The Old Man and his Grandson

There was once a very old man, whose eyes had become dim, whose ears had become dull of hearing, whose knees trembled, and who when he sat at table could hardly hold the spoon and spilt the broth upon the tablecloth or let it run out of his mouth.

His son and his son's wife were disgusted at this, so the old grandfather at last had to sit in the corner behind the stove, and they gave him his food in an earthenware bowl, and not even enough of it. And he used to look towards the table with his eyes full of tears. Once, too, his trembling hands could not hold the bowl, and it fell to the ground and broke. The young wife scolded him, but he said nothing and only sighed. Then they bought him a wooden bowl, for a few pence, out of which he was obliged to eat.

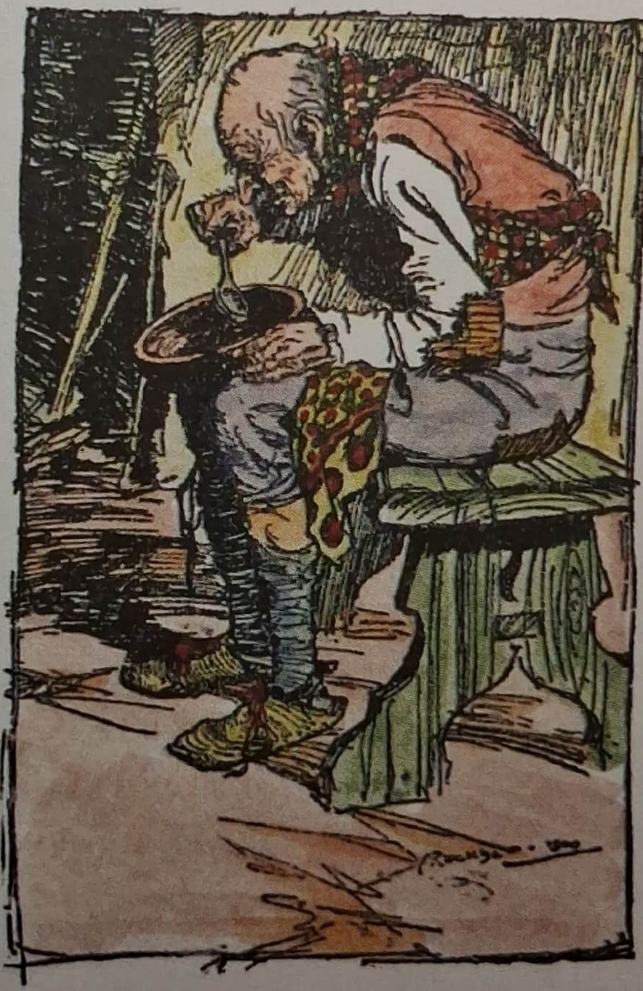


They were once sitting thus when the little grandson of four years old began to gather together some bits of wood upon the ground.

'What are you doing there?' asked the father.

'I am making a little trough,' answered the child, 'for father and mother to eat out of when I am big.'

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while, and presently began to cry. Then they took the old grandfather to the table, and henceforth always let him eat with them, and likewise said nothing if he did spill a little of anything.



The Little Peasant

There was a certain village wherein no one lived but really rich peasants, and just one poor one, whom they called the little peasant. He had not even so much as a cow, and still less money to buy one, and yet he and his wife did so wish to have one. One day he said to her: 'Listen, I have a good idea: let us get our old friend the carpenter to make us a wooden calf and paint it brown, so that it looks like any other, and in time it will certainly get big and be a cow.' The woman liked the idea, and their friend the carpenter cut and planed the calf, and painted it as it ought to be, and made it with its head hanging down as if it were eating.

Next morning when the cows were being driven out, the little peasant called the cowherd over and said: 'Look, I have a little calf there, but it is still small and has to be carried.'

The cowherd said: 'All right,' and took it in his arms and carried it to the pasture, and set it among the grass. The little calf always remained standing as if it were eating, and the cowherd said: 'It will soon run by itself, just look how it eats already!' At night when he was going to drive the herd home again, he said to the calf: 'If you can stand there and eat your fill, you can also walk on your four legs; I don't care to drag you home again in my arms.'

The little peasant stood at his door, and waited for his little calf, and when the cowherd drove the cows through the village, and the calf was missing, he enquired where it was.

The cowherd answered: 'It is still standing out there eating. It would not stop and come with us.'

But the little peasant said: 'Oh, but I must have my beast back again.' Then they returned to the meadow together, but someone had stolen the calf, and it was gone.

The cowherd said: 'It must have run away.'

The peasant, however, said: 'Don't tell me that,' and led the cowherd before the mayor, who for his carelessness condemned him to give the peasant a cow for the calf which had run away.

And now the little peasant and his wife had the cow for which they had so long wished, and they were heartily glad, but they had no food for it, and could give it nothing to eat, so it soon had to be killed. They salted the flesh, and the peasant went into the town in order to sell the skin there, so that he might buy a new calf with the proceeds. On the way he passed by a mill, and there sat a raven with broken wings, and out of pity he took him and wrapped him in the skin. But as the weather grew so bad and there was a storm of rain and wind, he could go no farther, and turned back to the mill and begged for shelter.

The miller's wife was alone in the house, and said to the peasant: 'Lay yourself on the straw there,' and gave him a slice of bread and cheese. The peasant ate it, and lay down with his skin beside him, and the woman thought: 'He is tired and has gone to sleep.' In the meantime came the parson; the miller's wife received him well, and said: 'My husband is out, so we will have a feast.' The peasant listened, and when he heard them talk about feasting he was vexed that he had been forced to make shift with a slice of bread and cheese. Then the woman served up four different things, roast meat, salad, cakes, and wine. Just as they were about to sit down and eat, there was a knocking outside. The woman said: 'Oh, heavens! It is my husband!' she quickly hid the roast meat inside the tiled stove, the wine under the pillow, the salad on the bed, the cakes under it, and the parson in the closet on the porch. Then she opened the door for her husband, and said: 'Thank heaven, you are back again! There is such a storm, it looks as if the world were coming to an end.'

The miller saw the peasant lying on the straw, and asked, 'What is that fellow doing there?'

'Ah,' said the wife, 'the poor knave came in the storm and rain and begged for shelter, so I gave him a bit of bread and cheese and showed him where the straw was.'

The man said: 'I have no objection, but be quick and get me something to eat.'

The woman said: 'But I have nothing but bread and cheese.'

'I am contented with anything,' replied the husband; 'so far as I am concerned, bread and cheese will do.' He looked at the peasant and said: 'Come and eat some more with me.' The peasant did not require to be invited twice, but got up and ate. After this the miller saw the skin in which the raven was, lying on the ground, and asked: 'What have you there?'

The peasant answered: 'I have a soothsayer inside it.'

'Can he foretell anything to me?' said the miller.

'Why not?' answered the peasant; 'but he only says four things, and the fifth he keeps to himself.'

The miller was curious, and said: 'Let me hear one of his prophesies.'

Then the peasant pinched the raven's head, so that he croaked and made a noise like krr, krr.

The miller said: 'What did he say?'

The peasant answered: 'In the first place, he says that there is some wine hidden under the pillow.'

'Bless me!' cried the miller, and went there and found the wine. 'Now go on,' said he.

The peasant made the raven croak again, and said: 'In the second place, he says that there is some roast meat in the tiled stove.'

'Upon my word!' cried the miller, and went thither, and found the roast meat. The peasant made the raven prophesy still more, and said: 'Thirdly, he says that there is some salad on the bed.'

'That would be a fine thing!' cried the miller, and went there and found the salad.

At last the peasant pinched the raven once more till he croaked, and said: 'Fourthly, he says that there are some cakes under the bed.'

'That would be a fine thing!' cried the miller, and looked there, and found the cakes.

And now the two sat down to the table together, but the miller's wife was frightened to death, and went to bed and took all the keys with her. The miller would have liked much to know the fifth, but the little peasant said: 'First, we will quickly eat the four things, for the fifth is something bad.' So they ate, and after that they bargained how much the miller was to give for the fifth prophecy, until they agreed on three hundred thalers.

Then the peasant once more pinched the raven's head till he croaked loudly.

The miller asked: 'What did he say?'

The peasant replied: 'He says that the Devil is hiding outside there in the closet on the porch.'

The miller said: 'The Devil must go out,' and opened the house-door; then the woman was forced to give up the keys, and the peasant unlocked the closet. The parson ran out as fast as he could, and the miller said: 'It was true; I saw the black rascal with my own eyes.'

The peasant, however, made off next morning by daybreak with the three hundred thalers.

At home the small peasant gradually launched out; he built a beautiful house, and the peasants said: 'The small peasant has certainly been to the place where golden snow falls, and people carry the gold home in shovels.' Then the small peasant was brought before the mayor, and bidden to say from whence his wealth came. He answered: 'I sold my cow's skin in the town for three hundred thalers.'

When the peasants heard that, they too wished to enjoy this great profit, and ran home, killed all their cows and stripped off their skins in order to sell them in the town to the greatest advantage. The mayor, however, said: 'But my servant must go first.' When she came to the merchant in the town, he did not give her more than two thalers for a skin, and when the others came, he did not give them so much, and said: 'What can I do with all these skins?'

Then the peasants, vexed that the small peasant should have thus outwitted them, wanted to take vengeance on him, and accused him of this treachery before the major. The innocent little peasant was unanimously sentenced to death, and was to be rolled into the water, in a barrel pierced full of holes. He was led forth, and a priest was brought who was to say a mass for his soul. The others were all obliged to retire to a distance. When the peasant looked at the priest, he recognised the man who had been with the miller's wife. He said to him: 'I set you free from the closet, set me free from the barrel.'

At this same moment up came, with a flock of sheep, the very shepherd who the peasant knew had long been wishing to be mayor, so he cried with all his might: 'No, I will not do it; if the whole world insists on it, I will not do it!'

The shepherd, hearing that, came up to him, and asked: 'What are you about? What is it that you will not do?'

The peasant said: 'They want to make me mayor, if I will but put myself in the barrel, but I will not do it.'

The shepherd said: 'If nothing more than that is needful in order to be mayor, I would get into the barrel at once.'

The peasant said: 'If you will get in, you will be mayor.'

The shepherd was willing, and got in, and the peasant shut the top down on him; then he took the shepherd's flock for himself, and drove it away. The parson went to the crowd, and declared that the mass had been said. Then they came and rolled the barrel towards the water. When the barrel began to roll, the shepherd cried: 'I am quite willing to be mayor.' They believed no otherwise than that it was the peasant who was saying this, and answered: 'That is what we intend, but first you shall look about you a little down below there,' and they rolled the barrel down into the water.

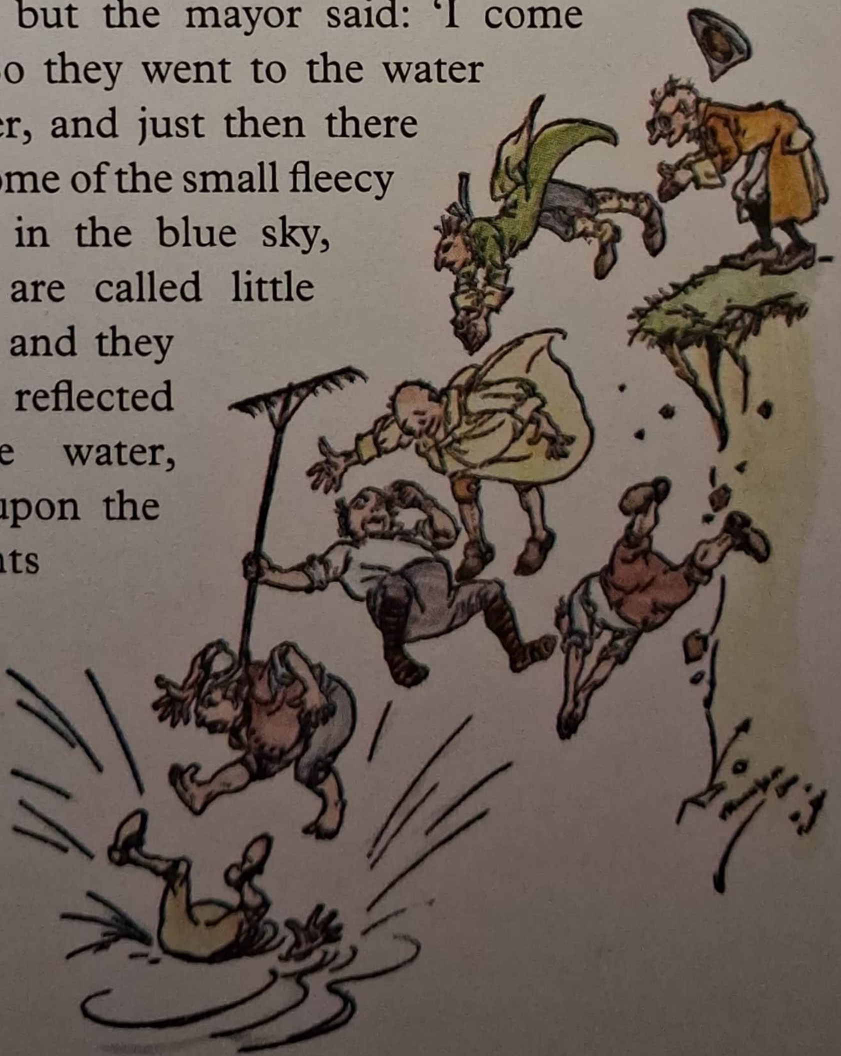
After that the peasants went home, and as they were entering the village, the small peasant also came quietly in, driving a flock of sheep and looking quite contented. Then the peasants were astonished, and said: ‘Peasant, from whence do you come? Have you come out of the water?’

‘Yes, truly,’ replied the peasant. ‘I sank deep, deep down, until at last I got to the bottom; I pushed the bottom out of the barrel, and crept out, and there were pretty meadows on which a number of lambs were feeding, and from thence I brought this flock away with me.’

Said the peasants: ‘Are there any more there?’

‘Oh, yes,’ said he, ‘more than I could want.’

Then the peasants made up their minds that they too would fetch some sheep for themselves, a flock apiece, but the mayor said: ‘I come first.’ So they went to the water together, and just then there were some of the small fleecy clouds in the blue sky, which are called little lambs, and they were reflected in the water, whereupon the peasants



cried: 'We already see the sheep down below!' The mayor pressed forward and said: 'I will go down first, and look about me, and if things promise well I'll call you.'

So he jumped in. Splash! went the water; it sounded as if he were calling them, and the whole crowd plunged in after him as one man. Then the entire village was dead, and the small peasant, as sole heir, became a rich man.

Frederick and Catherine

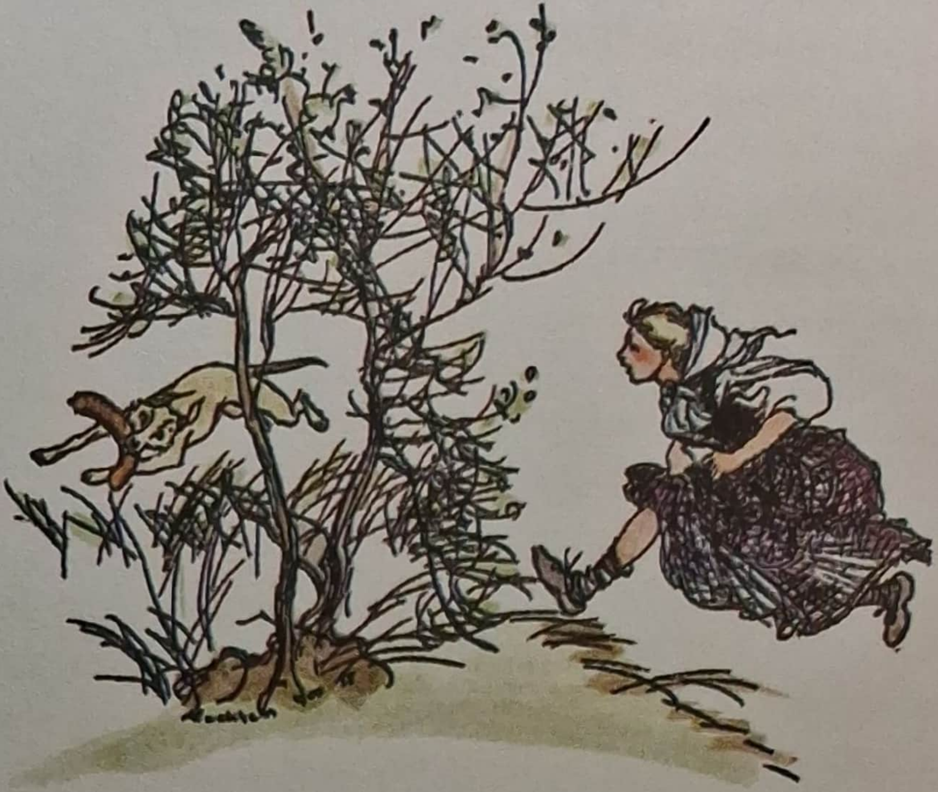
There was once a man called Frederick: he had a wife whose name was Catherine, and they had not long been married. One day Frederick said. 'Kate! I am going to work in the fields; when I come back I shall be hungry so let me have something nice cooked, and a good draught of ale.'

'Very well,' said she, 'it shall all be ready.' When dinner-time drew nigh, Catherine took a nice steak, which was all the meat she had, and put it on the fire to fry. The steak soon began to look brown, and to crackle in the pan; and Catherine stood by with a fork and turned it; then she said to herself, 'The steak is almost ready, I may as well go to the cellar for the ale.'

So she left the pan on the fire and took a large jug and went into the cellar and tapped the ale cask. The beer ran into the jug and Catherine stood looking on. At last it popped into her head, 'The dog is not shut up – he may be running away with the steak; that's well thought of.' So up she ran from the cellar; and sure enough the rascally cur had got the steak in his mouth, and was making off with it.

Away ran Catherine, and away ran the dog across the field; but he ran faster than she, and stuck close to the steak. 'It's all gone, and what can't be cured must be endured,' said Catherine. So she turned round; and as she had run a good way and was tired, she walked home leisurely to cool herself.

Now all this time the ale was running too, for Catherine had not turned off the tap; and when the jug was full the liquor ran upon the floor till the cask



was empty. When she got to the cellar stairs she saw what had happened. 'My stars!' said she, 'what shall I do to keep Frederick from seeing all this slopping about?' So she thought a while; and at last remembered that there was a sack of fine meal bought at the last fair, and that if she sprinkled this over the floor it would suck up the ale nicely. 'What a lucky thing,' said she, 'that we kept that meal! We have now a good use for it.' So away she went for it: but she managed to set it down just upon the great jug full of beer, and upset it; and thus all the ale that had been saved was set swimming on the floor also. 'Ah! well,' said she, 'when one goes another may as well follow.' Then she strewed the meal all about the cellar, and was quite pleased with her cleverness, and said, 'How very neat and clean it looks!'

At noon Frederick came home. 'Now, wife,' cried he, 'what have you for dinner?'

'Oh, Frederick!' answered she. 'I was cooking you a steak; but while I went down to draw the ale, the dog ran away with it; and while I ran after him, the ale ran out; and when I went to dry up the ale with the sack of meal that we got at the fair, I upset the jug; but the cellar is now quite dry, and looks so clean!'

'Kate, Kate,' said he, 'how could you do all this? Why did you leave the steak to fry, and the ale to run, and then spoil all the meal?'

'Why, Frederick,' said she, 'I did not know I was doing wrong; you should have told me before.'

The husband thought to himself, 'If my wife manages matters thus, I must look sharp myself.' Now he had a good deal of gold in the house, so he said to Catherine, 'What pretty yellow buttons these are! I shall put them into a box and bury them in the garden; but take care that you never go near or meddle with them.'

'No, Frederick,' said she, 'that I never will.' As soon as he was gone, there came by some pedlars with earthenware plates and dishes, and they asked her whether she would buy. 'Oh dear me, I should like to buy very much, but I have no money; if you had any use for yellow buttons, I might deal with you.'

'Yellow buttons!' said they; 'let us have a look at them.'

'Go into the garden and dig where I tell you, and you will find the yellow buttons. I dare not go myself.'

So the rogues went and when they found what these yellow buttons were, they took them all away, and left her plenty of plates and dishes. Then she set them all about the house for a show, and when Frederick came back, he cried out, 'Kate, what have you been doing?'

'See,' said she, 'I have bought all these with your yellow buttons; but I did not touch them myself: the pedlars went themselves and dug them up.'

'Wife, wife,' said Frederick, 'what a pretty piece of work you have made! Those yellow buttons were all my money; how came you to do such a thing?'

'Why,' answered she, 'I did not know there was any harm in it; you should have told me.'

Catherine stood musing for a while, and at last said to her husband, 'Hark ye, Frederick, we will soon get the gold back: let us run after the thieves.'

'Well, we will try,' answered he; 'but take some butter and cheese with you, that we may have something to eat by the way.'

'Very well,' said she, and they set out; and as Frederick walked the fastest, he left his wife some way behind. 'It does not matter,' thought she; 'when we turn back, I shall be so much nearer home than he.'

Presently she came to the top of a hill, down the side of which there was a road so narrow that the cart wheels always chafed the trees on each side as they passed. 'Ah, see now,' said she, 'how they have bruised and wounded those poor trees; they will never get well.' So she took pity on them, and made use of the butter to grease them all, so that the wheels might not hurt them so much. While she was doing this kind office, one of her cheeses fell out of the basket and rolled down the hill. Catherine looked, but could not see where it had gone; so she said, 'Well, I suppose the other will go the same way and find you; he has younger legs than I have.' Then she rolled the other cheese after it; and away it went, nobody knows where, down the hill. But she said she supposed that they knew the road, and would follow her, and she could not stay there all day waiting for them.

At last she overtook Frederick, who desired her to give him something to eat. Then she gave him the dry bread.

'Where are the butter and cheese?' said he.

'Oh!' answered she, 'I used the butter to grease those poor trees that the wheels chafed so; and one of the cheeses ran away so I sent the other after it to find it, and I suppose they are both on the road together somewhere.

What a goose you are to do such silly things!' said the husband.

'How can you say so?' said she; 'I am sure you never told me not.'

They ate the dry bread together; and Frederick said, 'Kate, I hope you locked the door safe when you came away.'

'No,' answered she, 'you did not tell me.'

'Then go home, and do it now before we go any farther,' said Frederick, 'and bring with you something to eat.'

Catherine did as he told her, and thought to herself by the way, 'Frederick wants something to eat; but I don't think he is very fond of butter and cheese. I'll bring him a bag of fine nuts, and the vinegar, for I have often seen him take some.'

When she reached home, she bolted the back door, but the front door she took off its hinges, and said, 'Frederick told me to lock the door, but surely it can nowhere be so safe as if I take it with me.' So she took her time by the way; and when she overtook her husband she cried out, 'There, Frederick, there is the door itself, you may watch it as carefully as you please.'

'Alas! alas!' said he, 'what a clever wife I have! I sent you to make the house fast, and you take the door away, so that everybody may go in and out as they please – however, as you have brought the door, you shall carry it about with you for your pains.'

'Very well,' answered she, 'I'll carry the door; but I'll not carry the nuts and vinegar bottle also – that would be too much of a load; so, if you please, I'll fasten them to the door.'

Frederick of course made no objection to that plan, and they set off into the wood to look for the thieves; but they could not find them, and when it grew dark, they climbed up into a tree to spend the night there. Scarcely were they up, than who should come by but the very rogues they were looking for. They were in truth great rascals, and belonged to that class of people who find things before they are lost; they were tired, so they sat down and made a fire under the very tree where Frederick and Catherine were. Frederick slipped down on the other side, and picked up some stones. Then he climbed up again, and tried to hit the thieves on the head with them: but they only said, 'It must be near morning, for the wind shakes the fir-cones down.'

Catherine, who had the door on her shoulder, began to be very tired; but she thought it was the nuts upon it that were so heavy; so she said softly, 'Frederick, I must let the nuts go.'

'No,' answered he, 'not now; they will discover us.'

'I can't help that: they must go.'

'Well, then, make haste and throw them down, if you will.'

Then away rattled the nuts down among the boughs and one of the thieves cried, 'Bless me, it is hailing.'

A little while after, Catherine thought the door was still very heavy; so she whispered to Frederick, 'I must throw the vinegar down.'

'Pray don't,' answered he; 'they will discover us.'

'I can't help that,' said she, 'go it must.'

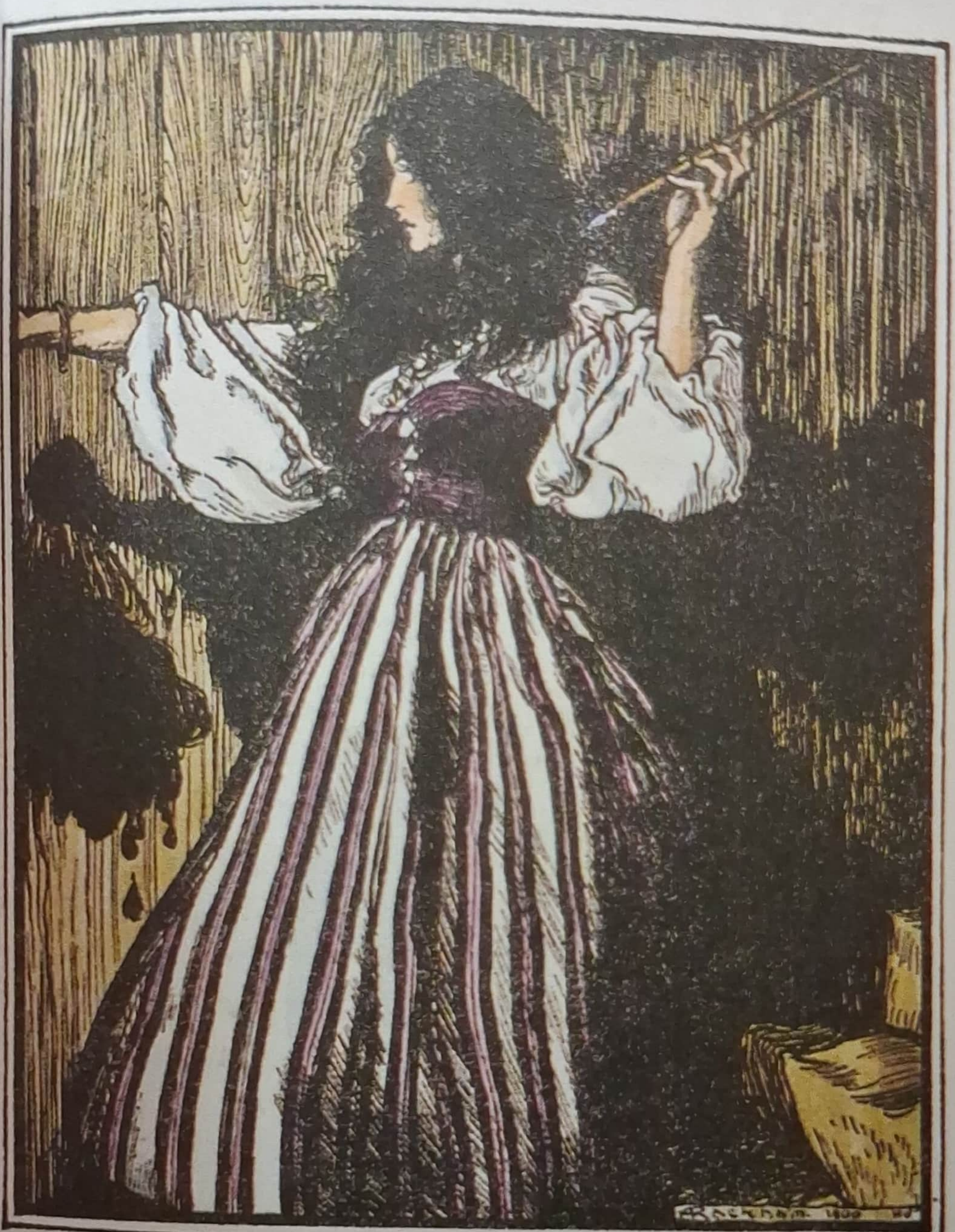
So she poured all the vinegar down; and the thieves said, 'What a heavy dew there is!'

At last it popped into Catherine's head that it was the door itself that was so heavy all the time; so she whispered, 'Frederick, I must throw the door down soon.' But he begged and prayed her not to do so, for he was sure it would betray them. 'Here goes, however,' said she: and down went the door with such a clatter upon the thieves, that they cried out 'Murder!' and not knowing what was coming next, ran away as fast as they could, and left all the gold. So when Frederick and Catherine came down, there they found all their money safe and sound.

Sweetheart Roland

There was once upon a time a woman who was a real witch and had two daughters, one ugly and wicked, and this one she loved because she was her own daughter, and one beautiful and good, and this one she hated, because she was her stepdaughter. The stepdaughter once had a pretty apron, which the other fancied so much that she became envious, and told her mother that she must and would have that apron. 'Be quiet, my child,' said the old woman, 'and you shall have it. Your stepsister has long deserved death; tonight when she is asleep I will come and cut her head off. Only be careful that you are at the far side of the bed, and push her well to the front.' It would have been all over with the poor girl if she had not just then been standing in a corner, and heard everything. All day long she dared not go out of doors, and when bedtime had come, the witch's daughter got into bed first, so as to lie at the far side, but when she was asleep, the other pushed her gently to the front, and took for herself the place at the back, close by the wall. In the night, the old woman came creeping in, she held an axe in her right hand, and felt with her left to see if anyone were lying at the outside, and then she grasped the axe with both hands, and cut her own child's head off.

When she had gone away, the girl got up and went to her sweetheart, who was called Roland, and knocked at his door. When he came out, she said to him: 'Listen, dearest Roland, we must fly in all haste; my stepmother wanted to kill me, but has struck her own child in error. When daylight comes, and she



sees what she has done, we shall be lost.'

'But,' said Roland, 'I counsel you first to take away her magic wand, or we cannot escape if she pursues us.' The maiden fetched the magic wand, and she took the dead girl's head and dropped three drops of blood on the ground, one in front of the bed, one in the kitchen, and one on the stairs. Then she hurried away with her lover.

When the old witch got up next morning, she called her daughter, and wanted to give her the apron, but she did not come. Then the witch cried: 'Where are you?'

'Here, on the stairs, I am sweeping,' answered the first drop of blood.

The old woman went out, but saw no one on the stairs, and cried again: 'Where are you?'

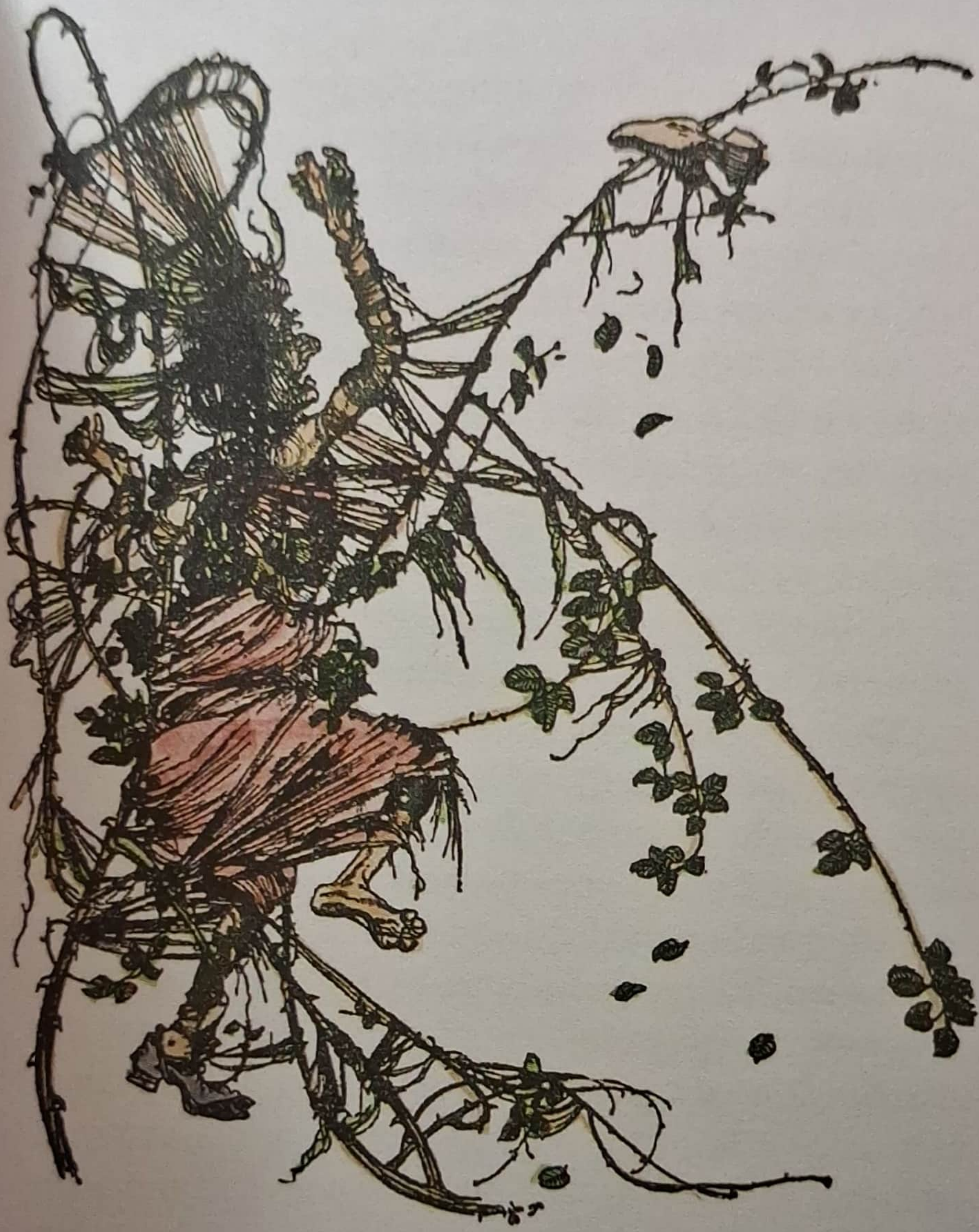
'Here in the kitchen, I am warming myself,' cried the second drop of blood.

She went into the kitchen, but found no one. Then she cried again: 'Where are you?'

'Ah, here in the bed, I am sleeping,' cried the third drop of blood.

She went into the room to the bed. What did she see there? Her own child, whose head she had cut off, bathed in her blood. The witch fell into a passion, sprang to the window, and, as she could look forth quite far into the world, she perceived her stepdaughter hurrying away with her sweetheart Roland. 'That shall not help you,' cried she, 'even if you have got a long way off, you shall still not escape me.'

She put on her many-league boots, in which she covered an hour's walk at every step, and it was not long before she overtook them. The girl, however, when she saw the old woman striding towards her, changed, with her magic wand, her sweetheart Roland into a lake, and herself into a duck swimming in the middle of it. The witch placed herself on the shore, threw breadcrumbs in, and went to endless trouble to entice the duck; but the duck did not let herself be enticed, and the old woman had to go home at night as she had come.



At this the girl and her sweetheart Roland resumed their natural shapes again, and they walked on the whole night until daybreak. Then the maiden changed herself into a beautiful flower which stood in the midst of a briar hedge, and her sweetheart Roland into a fiddler. It was not long before the witch came striding up towards them, and said to the musician: 'Dear musician, please may I pluck that beautiful flower for myself?'

'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'I will play to you while you do it.'

As she was hastily creeping into the hedge and was just going to pluck the flower, knowing perfectly well who the flower was, he began to play, and whether she would or not, she was forced to dance, for it was a magical dance. The faster he played, the more violent springs was she forced to make, and the thorns tore her clothes from her body and pricked her and wounded her till she bled, and as he did not stop, she had to dance till she lay dead on the ground.

As they were now set free, Roland said: 'Now I will go to my father and arrange for the wedding.'

'Then in the meantime I will stay here and wait for you,' said the girl, 'and that no one may recognise me, I will change myself into a red stone landmark.'

Then Roland went away, and the girl stood like a red landmark in the field and waited for her beloved. But when Roland got home, he fell into the snares of another, who so fascinated him that he forgot the maiden. The poor girl remained there a long time, but at length, as he did not return at all, she was sad, and changed herself into a flower, and thought: 'Someone will surely come this way, and trample me down.'

It befell, however, that a shepherd kept his sheep in the field and saw the flower, and as it was so pretty, plucked it, took it with him, and laid it away in his chest. From that time forth, strange things happened in the shepherd's house. When he arose in the morning, all the work was already done: the room was swept, the table and benches cleaned, the fire in the hearth was lit and the water was fetched, and at noon, when he came home, the table was laid, and a good dinner served. He could not conceive how this came to pass, for he never saw a human being in his house, and no one could have concealed himself in it.

He was certainly pleased with this good attendance, but still at last he was so afraid that he went to a wise woman and asked for her advice.

The wise woman said: 'There is some enchantment behind it, listen very early some morning if anything is moving in the room, and if you see anything, no matter what it is, throw a white cloth over it, and then the magic will be stopped.'

The shepherd did as she bade him, and next morning, just as day dawned, he saw the chest open and the flower come out. Swiftly he sprang towards it, and threw a white cloth over it. Instantly the transformation came to an end, and a beautiful girl stood before him, who admitted to him that she had been the flower, and that up to this time she had attended to his housekeeping. She told him her story, and as she pleased him he asked her if she would marry him, but she answered no, for she wanted to remain faithful to her sweetheart Roland, although he had deserted her. Nevertheless, she promised not to go away, but to continue keeping house for the shepherd.

And now the time drew near when Roland's wedding was to be celebrated, and then, according to an old custom in the country, it was announced that all the girls were to be present at it, and sing in honour of the bridal pair. When the faithful maiden heard of this, she grew so sad that she thought her heart would break, and she would not go thither, but the other girls came and took her. When it came to her turn to sing, she stepped back, until at last she was the only one left, and then she could not refuse. But when she began her song, and it reached Roland's ears, he sprang up and cried: 'I know the voice, that is my true bride. I will have no other!' Everything he had forgotten, and everything that had vanished from his mind, suddenly come home again to his heart. Then the faithful maiden held her wedding with her sweetheart Roland, and grief came to an end and joy began.

Snow White

It was the middle of winter, when the broad flakes of snow were falling around, that the queen of a country many thousand miles off sat working at her window, the frame of which was made of fine black ebony; and as she sat looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger and three drops of blood fell upon it. Then she gazed thoughtfully upon the red drops that sprinkled the white snow, and said, 'Would that my little daughter may be as white as that snow, as red as that blood and as black as this ebony window-frame!' And so it was that the little girl really did grow up – her skin was as white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as the blood and her hair as black as ebony; and she was called Snow White.

But this queen died; and the king soon married another wife, who became queen, and was very beautiful, but so vain that she could not bear to think that anyone could be handsomer than she was. She had a fairy looking-glass, and she would gaze upon herself in it and say:

'Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest, tell me, who?'

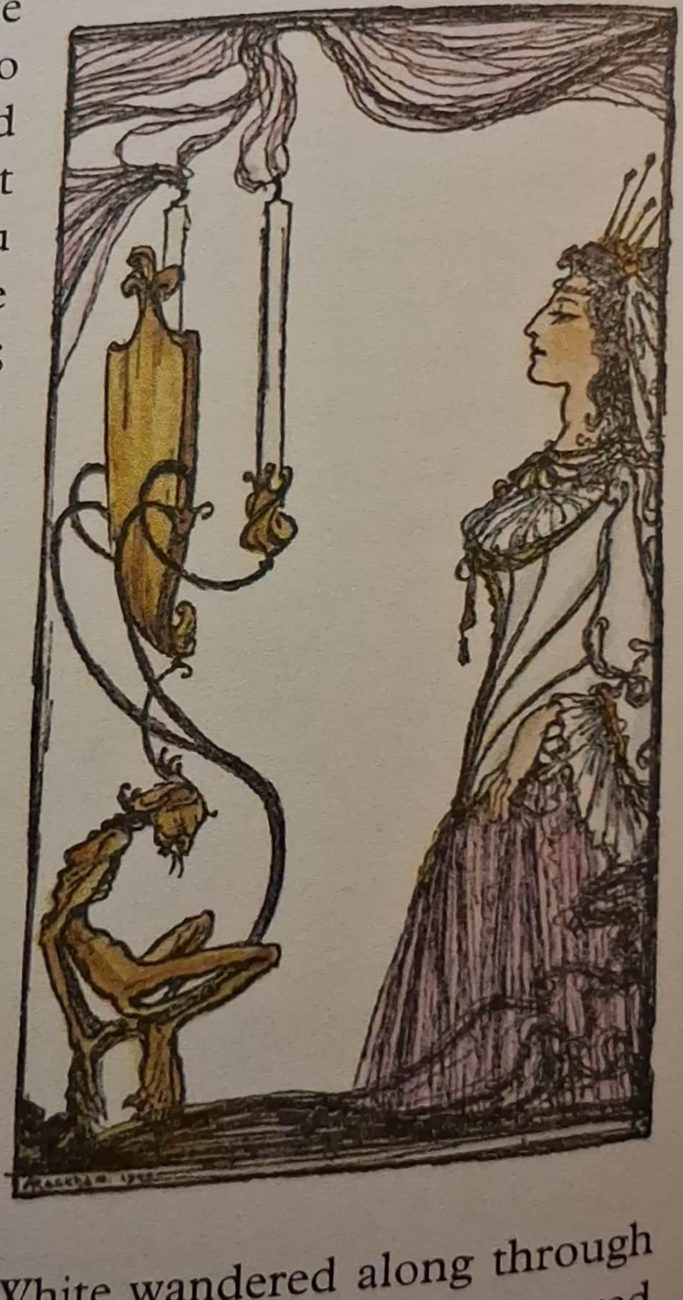
And the glass had always answered: 'Thou, queen, art the fairest in all the land.'

But Snow White grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old she was as bright as the day, and fairer than the queen herself. Then the glass one day answered the queen, when she went to look in it as usual:

'Thou, queen, art fair, and beauteous to see,
But Snow White is lovelier far than thee!'

When she heard this she turned pale with rage and envy, and called to one of her servants, and said, 'Take Snow White away into the wide wood, that I may never see her any more.'

Then the servant led her away; but his heart melted when Snow White begged him to spare her life, and he said, 'I will not hurt you, thou pretty child.' So he left her by herself; and though he thought it most likely that the wild beasts would tear her in pieces, he felt as if a great weight were taken off his heart when he had made up his mind not to kill her but to leave her to her fate, with the chance of someone finding and saving her.



Then poor Snow White wandered along through the wood in great fear; and the wild beasts roared about her, but none did her any harm. In the evening she came to a cottage among the hills, and went in